Vietnam Courier

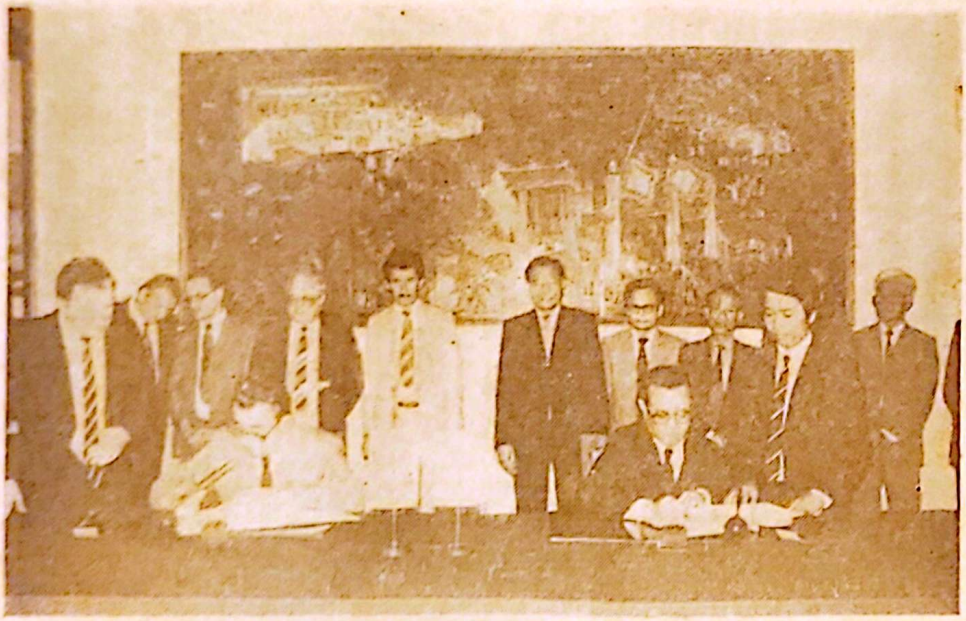
A MONTHLY REVIEW No. 4 – 1987

- New Development of Friendship and Cooperation
- Vietnam-Soviet Cultural Cooperation
- A Fresh Look at the Small-Scale Production of Commodities
- Renovation of Trade-Union Activities

AFTER THE SIXTH PARTY CONGRESS

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES

● *Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong receiving an Albanian economic delegation. (3 March 1987)*



● *Signing of an agreement on Vietnam — Hungary economic cooperation in Hanoi. (4 March 1987)*

● *Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong talking with GDR Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer. (10 March 1987)*

Photos: VNA

Hong Nhung, first-prize winner at the Hanoi Young Singers' Contest, 1987.

SINGING CONTESTS IN HANOI IN 1987

The Literature and Art Association, the Cultural and Information Service, the Federation of Trade Unions, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the Hanoi Radio and Television Broadcasting Station have recently organized in Hanoi singing contests for 1987.

Nearly two hundred competitors took part in the first round; for the second round the jury retained 72 names. The third, final round was contested by 25 competitors (including 10 "young voices").

The finals took place on 15 February 1987 at the Vietnam — Soviet Friendship Workers' Palace of Culture.

The jury included composers of repute such as Vinh Cat (chairman), Pham Dinh Sau, Hoang Van, Pham Tuyen, and outstanding singers: Quy Duong, Trung Kien, Tuong Vi. The first prize for "young voices" was granted to Hong Nhung, 17, a female 12th-former at Hoang Dieu secondary school and that for tenor voices to Duc Dien, an instructor at the Hanoi Polytechnic. Several second and third prizes were also awarded.

Prizes were also given to the best singers of folksongs, of songs praising the Party and its leaders, of songs about Hanoi, etc. New talents in vocal music revealed themselves at these contests which were a favourable occasion for musicians, composers and singers to meet and exchange experience.

VU HUNG

A BEAUTIFUL GROTTO DISCOVERED

A limestone grotto has recently been discovered in Ha Nam Ninh province, 3 km southeast of Tam Diep townlet. The grotto has three entrances, each about 2 m wide and looking in one of three directions: toward Tam Diep, Bim Son and Nga Son in Thanh Hoa province. The grotto has three floors on different levels. The first cave is 20 m deep with a vault 4-5 m high and covers about 200 square metres bristling with stalactites and stalagmites. After passing through a 7-8 metre-long tunnel, the visitor comes upon a stiff slope leading to the second cave about 135 square metres. A shimmering light descends from an aperture on the mountain top. Some of the stalactites and stalagmites are rather thin and give out strange sounds when knocked at. The floor is crisscrossed with meandering rivulets. The third cave contains a well of limpid water surrounded by steep walls sprinkled with bits of glinting quartz.

The visitor feels as if he were attending an exhibition of sculpture by Nature. The stalactites and stalagmites lighted from various angles call to mind eerie shapes of crouching elephants, squatting tigers, galloping horses, swimming fish... The grotto, named Tam Giao, lies in an area full of historic vestiges officially listed by the State. Nearly 200 years ago in this Dong Giao valley three armies under the command of Nguyen Hue, Ngo Van So and Phan Xuan Trieu met and under the overall leadership of the national hero Nguyen Hue routed a 200,000-strong army of Chinese Ching aggressor troops.

Discovered only early this year, the grotto has none the less attracted tens of thousands of visitors.

VAN HOA

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Front Cover: Tea-picking at the Song Lo State Farm (Vinh Phu province).

Photo: LAN XUAN

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PEAT BOGS IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

The Central Highlands is an important economic region of Vietnam. It is endowed with favourable conditions to grow coffee, rubber, pepper and tea over large areas, but badly lacks fertilizers and particularly fuel for both home and industrial use. Each year about ten thousand tonnes of firewood have to be supplied to the agricultural farms. The total quantity of firewood for home and industrial use approximates one million tonnes. The forested area has shrunk leading to the exhaustion of underground water and to ecological imbalance. To stop the destruction of forest, other sources of energy and fuel must be found. In the Central Highlands, these sources lie in wind, sun and water. Hydropower in particular shows huge potentials, but it calls for huge investments which are at present beyond our possibilities. And so, our researchers' attention has been focused on peat.

Early in 1985, Vietnamese geologists discovered the first peat bogs in the Central Highlands. They number a dozen by now, and lie mostly in the northern part of the region. Five in Dac Lac and Gia Lai — Kontum provinces contain peat rated as fit for industrial use.

From their investigations, our geologists have worked out the law governing the distribution of peat bogs in the Central Highlands.

These bogs cover areas ranging from hundreds to thousands of hectares and the thickness of deposits averages one metre. The largest bogs are located south of Buon Ma Thuot town.

Deposits of smaller sizes (about one hundred hectares) are found in closed and half-closed valleys.

The Cuoc Dang bog was discovered in Dac Lac in March 1985. It covers an area of 200 hectares, and contains deposits estimated at 900,000 cubic metres of which 50,000 — 70,000 tonnes may be extracted each year annually for over 10 years in a row. The peat found at Cuoc Dang can be used as household fuel, for firing of brick kilns, as manure and possibly for the firing of tea.

HUU TONG

PANORAMA ● PANORAMA

A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION ON A CASE OF CEREBRAL EMBOLISM

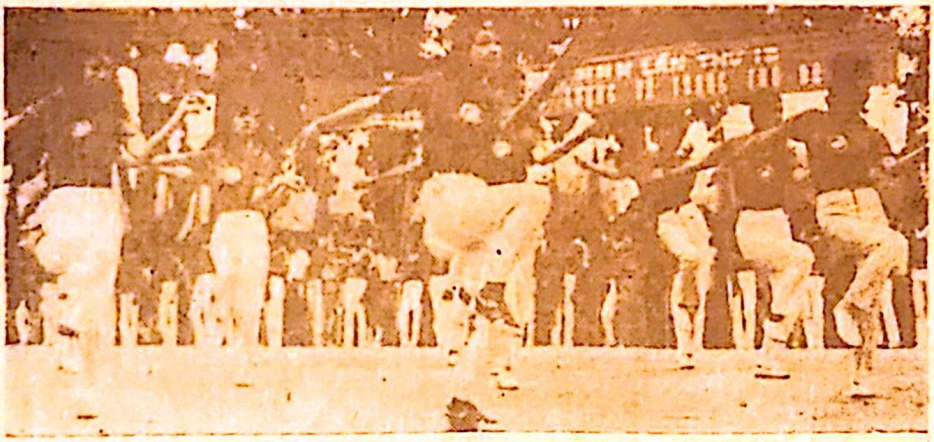
Neurosurgeons at the Vietnam-GDR Friendship Hospital in Hanoi have recently operated on a case of cerebral embolism by joining an artery outside the brain to one inside it.

The patient was Nguyen Minh Tuan, 30 years old, a worker at the Hai Duong Porcelain Factory (Hai Hung province). On 3 December 1986, suffering from terrible headache, he was taken to the provincial hospital. He was then hemiplegic and unable to speak. He was immediately sent to the Vietnam-GDR Friendship Hospital in Hanoi. The neurosurgeons here diagnosed a case of cerebral embolism.

On 8 December 1986, following tests and X-ray photography, Professor Doctor Nguyen Thuong Xuan, assisted by doctors Le Hong Nhan and Ly Ngoc Lien and anesthetist Doan Thi Thanh Tam, carried out an operation of microsurgery under an electronic microscope. An artery in the region of the temple was joined to the cerebral artery affected by the obstruction. The two arteries measure barely one millimetre across each. The operation lasted eight hours. It was the first of its kind in Vietnam.

After more than a month of further treatment, Tuan's condition was back to normal. New prospects have thus opened up for the treatment of various vascular ailments in our country by means of microsurgery.

HONG SON



MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS IN 1987

The key sporting event in 1987 will be the Second National Phu Dong Spartakiad for juniors (under 19) scheduled to take place in Ho Chi Minh City next July and to include track-and-field events, swimming, chess, free-style wrestling, gymnastics, table-tennis, volleyball and football.

Other major sporting contests are:

1. National free-style wrestling championship in Hanoi in spring.
2. National football championship, first division (beginning in March) with 27 teams participating.
3. The finals of the national table-tennis championship for the prize offered by the *Nhan Dan* paper, in Hanoi (March).
4. Track-and-field contests for school students in the North, the Centre and the South, culminating in the finals in Hanoi (April).
5. National volleyball championship (May) with 16 men's teams and 16 women's teams participating.
6. Shooting contest for juniors (Hanoi, July) and National shooting championship (Hanoi, November).
7. National championship for track-and-field events (Hanoi, October).
8. National championship for swimming and diving (October).
9. Cycle race "For Peace" on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution (7 November) in Ho Chi Minh City.
10. National boxing championship in Hai Phong (November).
11. Cross-country race for the prize offered by the *Tien Phong* (Vanguard) paper (December).

In 1987 Vietnamese sportsmen and sportswomen will participate in many international contests. Football teams of the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian and Soviet armies and a team of young Soviet boxers will come to Vietnam. Vietnamese sportsmen and sportswomen will participate in the Riga traditional gymnastics competition in the Soviet Union, the Seventh volley-ball tournament between the three Indochinese countries, the shooting contest for the prize offered by the Soviet paper *The Soviet Patriot*, the traditional track-and-field tournament in memory of the heroic Soviet brothers Znamenski, the "Universiad' 87" of world students in Yugoslavia, the Sports Festival of Southeast Asia in Indonesia.

TAN THONG

Aerobics exercises at Minh Khai Sports and Physical Culture Centre (Hanoi).

Photo: QUANG NGOC

THE STRENGTHENING OF THE VIETNAM – SOVIET MILITANT SOLIDARITY

High-level talk in Hanoi.

Photo: VNA

Over the past few days, the Vietnamese and Soviet peoples have been rejoicing at the new development of the relations of militant solidarity and fraternal cooperation between the two Parties and the two States. That was the great success of the official friendship visit to Vietnam made from 11 to 13 March 1987 by E. A. Shevardnadze, Political Bureau member of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

Both the official talks and friendly meetings between the messenger of the first socialist country and the Vietnamese Party and State leaders were marked by unanimity of views on issues of bilateral relations and on international questions of common interest.

Reviewing major international problems, the representatives of Vietnam and the Soviet Union expressed their great concern about the tension created in the world by the US-led warlike imperialist forces. While continuing to fan up conflicts everywhere, they frenziedly engage in a nuclear arms race with the dark scheme to bring mankind to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. Therefore, an urgent task is to step up co-ordinated actions by the socialist com-

munity and all peace- and progress-loving forces so as to impel forward the struggle for peace and international security. On this basis, the Vietnamese people warmly hail and fully support the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union aimed at step by step eliminating nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction from our planet. The two sides expressed solidarity and support to the peoples fighting against colonialism, imperialism, racial discrimination, for independence, freedom and social progress.

Regarding the problems of Asia and the Pacific, the two sides asserted that the Soviet peace initiatives put forward by M. S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok and the New Delhi Declaration by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and CPSU General Secretary M. S. Gorbachev are documents of historic significance expressing the aspiration and the will of the whole mankind struggling for peace and for a world free from nuclear weapons and the use of violence in international relations. Vietnam and the Soviet Union actively support the efforts to turn Asia and the Pacific into a zone of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation, and resolutely work toward this end by creating an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation on the basis of bilateral or multilateral agreements between all countries in the area. The two parties expressed the hope that the complex regional issues would be solved through peaceful negotiations.

The normalization and improvement of relations between Vietnam and the Soviet Union on the one hand and the People's Republic of China on the other, on the basis of equality and principles will make an important contribution to creating a wholesome situation in Southeast Asia and Asia. The two sides express full support to a just solution for the Kampuchean issue, as stated in documents of the Kampuchean State and common documents of the three Indochinese countries. They regard it as an important contribution to improving the situation in this area.

On bilateral relations, Vietnam and the Soviet Union expressed satisfaction at the dynamic development of their all-sided relations in the new stage, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism, in the framework of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the two countries in November 1978. In the new stage, this cooperation should be renovated in order to use even more efficiently the great potentialities of the Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation in line with the resolutions of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and those of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Vietnamese people highly value the activities of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government to renovate this cooperation and make it even more effective. The Soviet Union's active participation in drawing up a special programme of the CMEA countries to help Vietnam, Mongolia and Cuba constitutes a great encouragement for our people in their effort to implement the line of renovation mapped out by the CPV Sixth Congress. Successive generations of Vietnamese have realized that the Vietnam-Soviet solidarity and friendship is one of the decisive factors of the victory of our people's revolutionary cause, and a factor having a great impact upon peace and socialism in Asia and the Pacific.

NHAN DAN

BRANCH OF PUSHKIN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE INSTITUTE SET UP IN HO CHI MINH CITY

More and more people in Ho Chi Minh City and in the southern provinces of Vietnam wish to know Russian. In Ho Chi Minh City alone, some 50,000 people are studying this language in general educational schools, universities and after-work classes.

Consequently, the demand for more Russian-language teachers, better trained in both theory and practice, has become pressing. As a response to it, a branch of the Moscow-based Pushkin Russian-Language Institute was set up in Ho Chi Minh City on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Vietnam — Soviet Cultural Agreement (15 Feb. 1957) and the 150th anniversary of the death of Russian Poet A. Pushkin (10 Feb. 1837). This is the second of its kind in Vietnam. The first was founded in Hanoi in 1982.

The sub-institute's main concern is to introduce advanced methods for the teaching of Russian and to provide professional assistance to educational institutions in the southern provinces. It will organize for gifted students competitions on the Russian language and the Soviet land and organize exchanges of experience in the teaching and study of Russian.

The sub-institute, which is in direct contact with the Moscow institute, will also help universities in the compilation of courses of Russian language.

NGUYEN HONG SON

AN ASPECT OF OUR SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP

TRAN VAN PHAC
Member of CPV Central Committee
Minister of Culture

The consistent policy of the Communist Party of Vietnam is to unceasingly consolidate and cultivate our country's great friendship and comprehensive cooperation with the Soviet Union. This corresponds to the deep feelings of the Vietnamese people. The resolution of the 6th Congress of the CPV once again affirmed that "to unite and cooperate in all fields with the Soviet Union is the cornerstone of the foreign policy of our Party and State".

In the cultural domain, over the past thirty years (1957 — 87) Vietnamese — Soviet cooperation has not ceased to develop and has blossomed like a magnificent flower garden.

I would like, first of all, to emphasize the wholehearted assistance of the Soviet Union in trainning cultural and art workers for Vietnam. Emerging as it does from a long war, Vietnam has a very small body of cultural workers, most of them freshly returned from the battlefront to be assigned the heavy task of building a new, socialist culture and art.

They do not lack zeal and patriotism but their professional skills leave much to be desired. The need, therefore, has arisen to equip them with the necessary knowledge for them to undertake their momentous task. To help Vietnam overcome this difficulty, the Soviet Union has welcomed thousands of cadres, workers, students and graduate students coming there to study and do research. They have been trained in many fields of culture and art: cinematography, theatre, music, choreography, museum and library work, mass cultural activities, printing, publishing, book distribution, etc. In addition to long-term training, the Soviet Union has opened successive short-term refresher courses lasting from one to two months for directors of provincial or city cultural services, directors of cultural and art schools, directors of theatres, etc., and also courses in publishing, printing, library and museum work, organization of exhibitions and houses of culture... The Soviet Union has besides sent highly-qualified specialists to Vietnam to help in personnel training.

At the same time, the Soviet Union has helped Vietnam build a number of modern cultural facilities. The Lenin Monument built at Chi Lang Park in Hanoi has uplifted its cultural physiognomy. The Vietnam — USSR Friendship Workers' Cultural Palace built in the central part of Hanoi is one of the major cultural centres of our capital city.

The Lotus satellite earth stations bring us each day timely information about important political, social and cultural events. A plan has been drawn up for the expansion and modernization, with Soviet assistance, of the Tran Phu Printing Office in Ho Chi Minh City, one of the two largest printeries of Vietnam. Construction has started of the Ho Chi Minh Museum, also with Soviet assistance.

Deeply aware of the difficulties facing Vietnam, the Soviet Union has supplied us with modern equipment for our theatres. In the last five years in particular, Vietnam has received a sizable quantity of such equipment as a lighting system for Music-Dance-Opera Theatre, costumes and other properties for our drama troupes, equipment for the Hanoi Circus Troupe, equipment for libraries, together with a large quantity of electronic musical instruments, taped music, gramophone records, tape recorders, etc.

Cooperation has been multiform in cinematography. Each year on the occasion of the National Day of either country, a film week featuring some of its best cinema productions is organised in the other country. The exchange of films has also been stepped up.

The two countries have cooperated in the making of the documentary film "Star of Fraternity" (1984) and the feature film "Coordinates of Death" (1985). Both films have been warmly praised in the Soviet Union, Vietnam and other countries.

Art troupes of the Baltic Soviet Republic, Ukraina, Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Tadjikistan, the Russian Federative Republic, etc., have acquainted the Vietnamese people with the beauty and charm of various national arts in the vast land of the Soviets.

The Birch Folk Art Troupe, which has toured many countries, has made deep and durable impressions on Vietnamese audiences with its performances of beautiful Russian folk songs and folk dances.

For their part, the messengers of Vietnamese art have introduced Soviet audiences to some of the orginal arts of our country. The Soviet public was first acquainted with Vietnamese songs and dances as early as 1951 when in the thick of the war of resistance a Vietnamese art troupe performed in Moscow while on its way to the International Youth and Students Festival in Berlin. Soviet audiences have also shown great interest in the traditional dramatic genres of Vietnam such as *tuong* and *cheo* operas, and have expressed appre-

ciation of their artistic stylization and dramatic language.

They have been likewise acquainted with modern Vietnamese drama by visiting Vietnamese troupes. The Vietnam Puppet Theatre has added an original touch to the festival of national arts held in the Soviet city of Tashkent. For many years now Vietnamese artists have regularly taken part in such musical events in the Soviet Union as the "Golden Autumn", "Friendship Melodies" and "Red Carnation" festivals.

Many plays by Soviet authors, particularly those written by Pogodin about the life and work of Lenin, have been staged in Vietnam and warmly received by Vietnamese audiences.

In the domain of publishing, there has been close cooperation. The Vietnamese public has been introduced to most Russian classical and many modern Soviet writers in translation. At present, 16 Vietnamese publishing houses are cooperating with four of their Soviet counterparts in a plan to publish each year from 30 to 40 translations of Russian and Soviet books, to be printed in one to two million copies. The Vietnam Literature Publishing House alone has over the past thirty years published in translation 156 Soviet literary works of a representative character.

Conversely, Russian translations of more than 300 titles by prominent Vietnamese authors, both ancient and contemporary, have been published in the Soviet Union. The two countries have also cooperated in the publication of books in the natural and social sciences, technical books and school text-books. Particularly worthy of note is the translation and wide distribution of works by Party and State leaders of the two countries together with documents of national congresses held by their Communist Parties. An important event in the political, social and cultural life of the two countries took place in 1981 when the *Su That* (Truth) Publishing House in Vietnam and the Progress Publishers in the Soviet Union completed the publication in Vietnamese of the "Complete Works of Lenin" comprising 55 volumes, a priceless gift of the Party, Government and people of the Soviet Union to the Vietnamese Party, Government and people. At about the same time, the Soviet Union in cooperation with Vietnam has published in Russian translation a 15-volume selection of Vietnamese literature.

Vietnam has occupied a worthy place at International Book Fairs organized biannually in Moscow. For its part the Soviet Union has held many book exhibitions in major Vietnamese cities.

In other cultural branches cooperation has continually broadened through exchanges of photographs, museum exhibits, and visits by experts. The Soviet Union has created favourable conditions for Vietnam to take part in various international cultural events held in the Soviet Union and other countries as well.

In the domain of music two Vietnamese pianists, trained at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory, won great distinctions in international competitions: Dang Thai Son, was awarded the first prize at the 10th Chopin Piano Contest held in Warsaw in 1980: Ton Nu Nguyet Minh, the second prize at an international contest held in Italy in 1983 and third prize at the Smettana Contest held in Czechoslovakia in 1981.

In recent years, an outstanding event was the organisation in Vietnam for the first time of days of Soviet Culture in 1982 on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Never before had the Vietnamese public in general and art workers in particular been offered such a broad panorama of Soviet culture. In 1985 Days of Vietnamese Culture were organized in the Soviet Union also for the first time on the occasion of some major anniversaries of Vietnam. In Moscow and a number of other major cities, the Soviet public was introduced to specimens of both traditional and modern art forms of Vietnam.

This year, the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the ministries of culture of the two countries will again organize Days of Soviet Culture in Vietnam. For its part, the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture will do everything possible to turn them into a major cultural festival of the Vietnamese people. ●

The Kiev Ballet Troupe in Hanoi.

Photo: VAN HIEN

THE KATHMANDU ROUND TABLE

VU CAN

At the personal invitation of U.N. Under-Secretary General Yasushi Akashi, Vu Can, a leading personality of Vietnam Courier, *attended a Mass Media Round Table recently held in the capital of Nepal.*

The World Mass Media Leaders' Round Table for the Asian Region was held under U.N. sponsorship in Kathmandu from 17 to 19 February last. It was attended by representatives of the mass media from 23 countries, senior officials of the United Nations, and representatives of various governments to this world organization. It was convened and chaired by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, U.N. Under-Secretary General for Public Information. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, Prime Minister M.M. Singh Srestha and Minister of Communications H.B. Basnet delivered greetings at the opening meeting. The special attention of the U.N. Secretariat and the host country and the discussion of certain problems of major concern at our epoch pointed to the importance of this forum.

The Kathmandu Round Table is part of a series of U.N.-sponsored meetings of the international press held since 1981 for various regions of the globe and aimed at a twin purpose: on the one hand, to promote understanding of the objectives and activities of the United Nations on the part of the mass media and, hence, of the public at large; on the other hand, to help diplomats and U.N. officials perceive the concerns of the press circles.

The agenda of the Kathmandu Round Table comprised the following issues: The U.N.: Its Ideals and Reality; The Political Role of the Secretary General; Is the U.N. Secretariat a Bloated, Inefficient Bureaucracy; The Role of the Small Nations in the U.N.; U.N. Concerns in Southeast Asia; The Challenge of Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific...

Three members of the socialist community sent representatives to the Round Table: the Soviet Union, Vietnam and Mongolia. Although coming from countries with different social regimes, all the

participants shared common concerns about the destiny of mankind and life on earth. All expressed their resolve to defend peace, put an end to the arms race, advance toward denuclearization and disarmament, promote peaceful coexistence and international cooperation. They took note of the commendable efforts and important achievements of the United Nations, of the Secretary General and the Secretariat for peace and cooperation and humanitarian aid: arrangements to reduce tension in East-West relations, defusing local or regional conflicts which might have led to a global conflagration, assistance to developing countries for their economic construction, contribution to the fight against famine and drought in Africa, etc.

Obviously, with the increasing participation of progressive forces in major undertakings of the international community, the United Nations has been playing an ever more positive role. However, because it is still subjected to a significant influence of anti-progressive forces led by US imperialism, it has not always been able to carry out its lofty mission.

The participants alluded several times to the important peace initiatives of the Soviet Union, among them, the programme for establishing in the Asian-Pacific region a system of general and total security, as has been expounded by CPSU General Secretary M. S. Gorbachev in his famous Vladivostok speech.

The conference took note with sympathy of the information given by the Mongolian delegate about the untiring efforts of the People's Republic of Mongolia for peace and cooperation and about its proposal for the signing of a treaty on refraining from the use of force and from the threat to use force in relations among Asian-Pacific countries. No doubt the peace policy pursued perseveringly and consistently by the countries of the socialist community has had a wide echo. Among the growing number of countries adhering to it, mention must be made first of all of India. At the conference a representative of this great country stated: "India is against no one; it is only against wrongdoings." In the interest of peace and cooperation, is this not an approach with a high philosophical content to the complex issues of present-day world?

The exchange of views on the subject of "U. N. Concerns in Southeast Asia" began with an introduction by Mr. Rafeeudin Ahmed, UN Under-Secretary General for International Economic and Social Affairs and Special Representative of the Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs in Southeast Asia. He is a frequent visitor to the region and recently came to Vietnam, his ninth trip since 1982. Speaking of the situation in Southeast Asia, he commended the efforts by Indonesia and Vietnam to strengthen relations between the two countries and bridge the gap between the two groups of nations, the ASEAN and Indochinese countries, and expressed the hope that these two groups would soon overcome the obstacles still standing in the way of dialogue. He highlighted the great significance of the Sixth National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the three economic programmes it worked out (food, consumer goods, and export commodities), and the Vietnamese intention to withdraw all volunteer troops from Kampuchea by 1990.

The Kathmandu Round Table, because it was a Round Table, did not seek unanimity of views. However, the ideas expressed there on the fundamental problems of our times usually converged and the atmosphere of the debate was open and cordial. Clearly the conference was held under the sign of peace and cooperation and was a success. This was a success of the trend toward dialogue which had been winning ground. It was also a success of the organizing committee headed by U.N. Under-Secretary General Yasushi Akashi, a man with wide knowledge and rich experience. ●

SECOND ACT OF U.S. «INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS»

The Irangate scandal now plaguing the Reagan Administration is only a relapse of the disease which has been eating into the body politic of the United States ever since President Lyndon Johnson took the fatal decision to invade Vietnam massively in mid-1965. It is in fact a continuation of the Watergate affair which led to the downfall of Richard Nixon and thus is rightly considered to be the second act of the "institutional crisis" that has rocked the United States for nearly a quarter century now.

While in the past the evil power behind Watergate was the FBI, today the CIA plays that role in Irangate. The US public is wondering whether it is the US President who manipulates domestic and foreign issues by using the FBI and the CIA or whether it is the other way round: are those secret agencies dictating policies to the President? In any event the Watergate and Irangate scandals have supplied more evidence on the existence in the United States of two "invisible governments" — to quote a favourite phrase of the Western media — representing the American military-industrial complex, the most warlike, fascist and reactionary forces in the United States. They actually constitute the foundation of "American domocracy", which has its highest expression in the presidential system. Watergate and Irangate have pushed America deeper into an "institutional crisis" which is cracking its political fabric, creating serious disturbances and acute conflicts among the opposing political forces, and triggering off strong protests from the people.

Some phenomena newly emerged from this crisis are being attentively followed by political observers in all continents.

Most striking is the brazen-faced abuse of power by the CIA in the handling of US foreign policy. On 21 January 1987, reporting on the testimony of Secretary of State George Shultz before Congress, the CBS television network made known that the CIA had maintained its contacts with Iran even after US arms sale to that country had been discovered in November 1986. At the same congressional hearing, Shultz declared that he was "greatly annoyed when finding out that the CIA has kept its contacts with Iran in defiance of an order from the Secretary of State" (AFP-Washington 22-1-1987).

Irangate has also revealed the sinister connection between the CIA and the FBI. By selling arms to Iran and surreptiously diverting part of the profits to the Contras, Ronald Reagan has not only flouted the decisions taken by Congress with regard to US relations with Iran but has also violated US financial laws and regulations.

The second act of the US "institutional crisis" has shed further light on the personality of Reagan, on the US presidential system, and on so-called "American democracy". Watergate and Irangate have shown that this "democracy" only benefits the FBI, the CIA, the military-industrial complex, and US monopoly capitalism, a condominium of warmongers of various hues of whom the US President is the highest representative. Of this gang he is at the same time an accomplice, a member, and an operative.

Are these only "loopholes" in the US presidential system as some US politicians would like us to believe, or aren't they rather products of US imperialism, of the social system now functioning in the USA? There is little doubt that the tragedy is to continue on the US political stage.

A THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA

The US-South Korean joint military manœuvres code-named "Team Spirit 87", begun on 19 February, are to last two months and have led to a serious situation in Northeast Asia. With the participation of more than 200,000 troops belonging to the two countries' naval, ground, and air forces, armed with all kinds of modern weapons and military equipment, those manœuvres are a real threat to peace and security in the Korean peninsula and in the whole region. They also constitute a military provocation by Washington and Seoul and are part of the Pentagon's war plan against the DPRK, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

This show of force by Washington and Seoul is taking place at a time when 40,000 G.I.s are stationed in South Korea, and the Pentagon is sending there more nuclear weapons. So far, the US has deployed in South Korea no fewer than 1,000 units armed with nuclear weapons, including bombs, artillery shells, missiles, and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and neutron bombs. It has simultaneously built up large stockpiles of nuclear weapons, reinforced its military alliances with Seoul and Tokyo, and tried to involve its allies in the arms race, in implementation of its reactionary "new global strategy". But the more they frantically prepare for war, the more the US and South Korea reveal themselves as pursuing a confrontation policy and opposing the people's legitimate aspirations for peace in Korea and in other countries of the region.

A solution for the Korean issue must be based on the fair and reasonable proposals put forward by the DPRK aimed at easing tension step by step and at creating an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and ultimately leading to peace and unification of the Korean nation, thus meeting the desire and interest of the people in both the North and the South. Ignoring the DPRK's goodwill proposals, the US has persisted in scheming to prolong its occupation of South Korea, keep it in the sphere of influence of US neo-colonialism and turn it into a huge military base in order to oppose peace, national independence and socialism. The "Team Spirit 87" military manœuvers are part of this scheme.

Together with all peace-loving forces in the world, we demand that Washington and Seoul stop their provocative actions and threats to the DPRK and other nations in the region. The US must withdraw all its troops and weapons from South Korea and stop its interference in Korean internal affairs so that the Korean people can determine their own destiny.

THE GDR AND VIETNAM

Over the past forty years, the German Democratic Republic, the first worker-peasant State in Germany, has come a long way in building a fine and equitable society, turning the dream of Marx and Engels into reality.

While at its founding the national income of the GDR totalled only 24.1 billion marks, it had risen to 300 billion marks by 1986, a 13-fold increase. Industrial output has increased 15 times, and the real income of the workers by nine times. In the past four decades, the GDR has built nearly 4 million flats, and it plans to solve the housing question on a national scale by 1990 (by then each family will be housed in a flat of from three to five rooms with every comfort). The GDR is one of the ten most developed industrial countries in the world. Though accounting only for 0.4 per cent of the world's population, it turns out an amount of products representing 1.4 per cent of the world's total.

The GDR has given top priority to the two strategic tasks of building socialism and safeguarding peace. To preserve peace, it has consistently adhered to the peace policy of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

Together with the fraternal countries, it has proposed that the Warsaw and NATO countries sign a treaty banning the use of force and preserving peace between the two military alliances, it has put forward a series of peace initiatives, creation of a common security system in Europe, and simultaneous reduction of armaments by the Warsaw and NATO blocs, establishment of a nuclear-free corridor along the border line between the two blocs and setting up of a zone free from chemical weapons in Central Europe. These are practical proposals which, if acted upon, would help free Europe and mankind from the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust. They have received warm responses from public opinion around the world.

The GDR has given strong and effective support to Vietnam.

Many factories and enterprises, many cultural, educational and health projects built with GDR assistance have made their effects felt in the life of the Vietnamese people. They are beautiful flowers of Vietnam-GDR friendship.

The GDR has actively supported the fair and reasonable proposals of the Indochinese countries aimed at peacefully solving regional questions in Southeast Asia.

The official friendship visit to Vietnam from 9 to 11 March, 1987 by Oskar Fisher, member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Foreign Minister of the GDR, was crowned with success. During both official talks and informal meetings between Foreign Minister Oskar Fisher and Vietnamese Party and State leaders, the two sides displayed unanimity of views on all questions of bilateral relations and on international issues of mutual concern. The two sides reaffirmed their solidarity, cooperation and mutual assistance in the realisation of the resolutions of their respective recent Party congresses. They expressed their common desire to further develop their many-sided relations especially in the field of economic, scientific, technical, cultural and social cooperation, on the basis of the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty signed between the two countries in December 1977.

THE US IN A CLEFT STICK IN SOUTH PACIFIC

The Reagan Administration has refused to sign the protocols of the Rarotonga Treaty aimed at establishing a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific. The treaty was signed by 11 nations and two mandated territories in May 1985.

The signatories to the treaty commit themselves not to manufacture, test, stockpile or use nuclear weapons in the South Pacific and call on the five nuclear powers to sign the treaty, to pledge not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against the member countries of the Rarotonga Treaty, not to carry out nuclear tests, not to dump nuclear waste or manufacture nuclear weapons in the region.

On, 11 December 1986, with the ratification of the Rarotonga Treaty by Australia — the 8th country to do so — the Treaty officially came into effect, paving the way for turning the vast region of the South Pacific stretching from the Equator to the Antarctic into a nuclear-free zone, thus making a positive contribution to peace and stability in the region and in the world. Four days after the treaty took effect, on 15 December 1986, the Soviet Union signed the protocols of the treaty. This action of the Soviet Union demonstrates its high sense of responsibility toward the deep and ardent aspiration of the people in the South Pacific. At the same time, it is another illustration of its consistent and principled foreign policy of opposing the nuclear arms race for the sake of peace and security of all nations.

Right from the outset, Washington has looked askance at the anti-nuclear movement in the South Pacific and the Rarotonga Treaty. The coming into effect of the treaty has placed the United States in an awkward position. If it refuses to sign the treaty it will antagonize the nations in a region of strategic significance which it is trying to win over, especially following the rift with New Zealand which has in practice broken up the ANZUS military alliance. But if it signs the treaty it will have acted counter to its arms race policy and its global strategy. After a period of indecision, on 4 February 1987, the Reagan Administration formally announced that it "could not sign the Rarotonga Treaty at the present juncture".

The US State Department hastily added that the US Government had chosen this course of action "because of US interests and its responsibility toward global security". This awkward explanation has revealed the real motive behind the US refusal. The Rarotonga Treaty would prohibit the introduction of US nuclear weapons into the South Pacific and thus prevent the United States from using the Micronesian islands for stockpiling them and from establishing a system of air and naval bases in this area.

Moreover, as Rattman, spokesman of the US State Department, has admitted, this treaty might "create a precedent for the establishment of other nuclear-free zones". Clearly, Washington is deeply worried lest the people in many other regions such as Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Europe, the Balkans, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean, Africa, etc., should also demand that their regions be made into nuclear-free zones. Together with the Tlatelonco Treaty banning nuclear weapons in Latin America, signed earlier by 23 nations in that region, the Rarotonga Treaty will surely have a strong positive impact on the struggle of the nations in all parts of the world aimed at establishing nuclear-free zones. ●

A FRESH LOOK AT THE SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES

CHE VIET TAN

In the past, in varying degrees, we have made this mistake: we have sought quickly to build a "pure" socialist society. Therefore "in the ideological field we have shown ourselves to lag behind in theoretical perception and in the application of the laws governing the period of transition to socialism. We have suffered from voluntarism and simplism, and we have sought to achieve within a short time many objectives of socialism while our country is still in the initial stage". (Political Report of the Sixth Party Congress).

That theoretical lag has revealed itself in a number of cadres with simplistic scholastic concepts on socialist construction and has taken shape over a period of several decades. It presents many points which do not conform to practical conditions in Vietnam, which is still in the initial stage of the transition to socialism. The technical knowledge of a number of our cadres, like the technical equipment of our country's economy lag behind the technical advances achieved in the world, where miraculous happenings have changed the productive forces and the thinking of our times.

A new way of thinking requires that we should perceive and act in conformity with the changes happening in the new times and with the laws objectively existing in the socialist system, and apply them imaginatively with a view to working out correct solutions to our immediate economic problems, and eventually fulfilling all the tasks of the initial stage of the transition to socialism.

New economic thinking requires that we should be fully conscious of the characteristics of commodity production under socialism. It basically shifts away from the old system of economic thinking, from the old system of managing the economy of products, and from the experience acquired in the management of traditional industry.

That new economic thinking must be accompanied by a profound knowledge of the components of our country's present economy, namely, the socialist sector, the collective sector, the joint-State-capitalist sector, the private capitalist sector, and the individual producers' sector.

Commodity production will persist during the transition period and even under socialism. So, in the application of socialist economic laws we must not overlook the laws governing commodity production, the role of the market, and the commodity-money relationship in a planned socialist economy. This economy, in the context of the present scientific-technical revolution and the international division of labour and cooperation, is governed by objective laws regarding the development of productive forces in our country.

From the perception and correct application of the above-mentioned points, we can draw the following conclusions:

— In the transition period in our country, in order to expand and strongly develop the production and circulation of commodities, and this when the possibilities of the socialist economic sector are still limited, we should make the most of all economic sectors with a view to mobilizing all economic potentials of our country for the development of productive forces. We cannot seek to eliminate all non-socialist economic sectors by dint of fiats, thereby weakening the social productive forces. On the contrary we must "use them in order to transform them, and transform them in order better to use them."

— We should make use of the commodity-money relationship and correctly apply the law of value and market relationships in the planning of the national economy. We are planning a commodity economy in order to build socialism, not managing an economy of products. That's why we should eliminate the bureaucratic subsidy-based centralized system of management and shift to new managerial mechanisms. We must apply socialist economic accounting and mode of enterprise and renovate planning in order to make it into really central and effective work.

— We should further expand our economic relations with foreign countries in order to make use of new elements of our times for the development of our economy. We should entirely rely on the socialist system, first and foremost the Soviet Union, closely unite with our brotherly neighbours, namely Laos and Kampuchea, in order to build socialism. At the same time we should expand economic relations with other countries, including developed capitalist countries, on the basis of respect for each other's national independence, sovereignty and mutual benefit.

We should make use of multiform economic relations with foreign countries, ranging from developing export and import trade, sub-contracting, labour cooperation, joint ventures to attract foreign investments. Efforts should be redoubled to develop tourism.

Assembling television antennae in a handicraft shop in Ho Chi Minh City.

Photo: PHAM DO

On the basis of those ideas and while implementating the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, we will work out specific socio-economic policies aimed at making full use of all existing possibilities and liberating all our potentialities in order to boost production, stabilize socio-economic life, and carry out industrialization according to a new strategy that will conform to the changes of our times. The Sixth Party Congress had the historic task of putting right past errors, of bringing home to our Party and people the "urgent and vital need" for a new view of our times, for a true renovation of our thinking, especially our economic thinking, and our way of doing things, of building socialism, so as to catch up with our epoch now approaching the 21st century.

"With regard to small-scale commodity production, the State acknowledges the necessity of this economic sector in the transition period and will give it guidance and assistance in production and trading, and in association with the State and collective sectors. People engaged in private undertakings should be induced to join collectives only on the basis of free consent and mutual benefit. There should be no prejudice and discrimination against, or harassment of, self-employed people who are not yet willing to join collectives or who wish to leave them after joining them." (Political Report of the Sixth Party Congress).

This economic sector, which includes craftsmen, peasants who have not yet joined cooperatives, small traders, individual suppliers of services, and self-employed people, constitutes a considerable productive force in many fields — production, services, cultural, social, and everyday life.

According to figures supplied by the General Department of Statistics, based on 1982 prices, by late 1985 small-scale commodity production (the private and individual economy in statistics) produced one-third of the gross social product and accounted for 32.7% of the national income; it provided a living to about one-third of the population and created employment for 30% of the social workforce in many branches of production and services... It included even retired people, physically handicapped people, and people under working age. This economic sector may create a great deal of employment while State investments are limited.

Unlike the private capitalist sector, small-scale commodity production does not involve exploitation of man by man. Those engaged in this sector are working people and, of course, private owners.

Small-scale commodity production is close to the family economy for it involves individual labour. However, the family economy is not an independent economic sector; it is only part of the socialist economic sector, and its members are tied to the State (workers and employees) and to organizations of the collective economy (co-op members).

Small-scale commodity production, as an economic sector, has its own funds, techniques, equipment and materials, and has ties with overseas Vietnamese from whom it can attract funds in foreign currencies, materials and equipment with a view to expanding production and trading.

Small-scale commodity producers quickly respond to changes in the market and consumer demand.

In our country, which has a low level of production, a large population and few employment opportunities, industrialization should start from two poles. One, which consists of such traditional trades as agriculture, forestry, fishing, handicrafts, can provide sources of accumulation; the other pole consists of modern technical equipment to modernizing traditional trades. This has been proved by the practice of socialist construction in fraternal socialist countries and by the process of industrialization and economic development in a number of other countries in recent years.

In the past, Party resolutions have affirmed the objective existence and the position of this economic sector, but no specific economic policies, guidelines and measures have been adopted to encourage it. On the contrary, there have been committed fairly widespread errors, namely overhastiness,

impatience, attempts to force individual producers to join cooperatives, and to "quickly eliminate" the private economy through administrative measure. Thus, in many places houses and properties have been searched and inventoried in disregard of State regulations; tax rates have been set too high, procurement prices too low, checkpoints established to prevent the circulation of commodities, etc. Discriminatory measures have been taken against individual producers and their children, in the social, political and economic fields.

* * *

With a view to using and transforming the small-scale production of commodities in the spirit of the Sixth Party Congress I would make the following proposals in the economic field:

— We should, using adequate economic forms, make the most of the small-scale commodity production economic sector in agricultural production, small-scale industries and handicrafts, service activities, in order to concentrate our human and material resources on the implementation of the three programmes on the production of food, consumer goods, and export goods.

State assistance must be given to the production of food, short-growth and perennial industrial crops, afforestation, the garden economy, livestock and poultry breeding, the production of work tools, building materials and the necessary consumer goods, traditional handicrafts, the development of both rudimentary and motorized means of communications: minibuses, motor boats, oxcarts; the development of service activities and repair facilities; and the production of consumer goods from materials supplied by the State.

— The State should promulgate laws and other legal documents on economic activities by individual producers. It should clearly define the objects of such activities; the responsibilities and obligations of those engaged in them; the responsibility of the State to provide assistance; and most importantly, the determination of activities to be encouraged and those to be forbidden.

Our labour code should include the whole of social labour, including individual producers' labour and define the related institutions, thereby eliminating political prejudices and showing true respect for all labour which is useful to society.

— The State should work out specific policies and measures to assist and encourage small-scale commodity production: supply of work tools and raw materials, purchase of products...

The State should devise forms for the association of small-scale commodity production with the collective economy and the State-run economy. Wholesome socialist competition, organized and led by the Party and the State within that economic sector and between various economic sectors, should be allowed with a view to invigorating patriotic emulation, boosting labour productivity, expanding the production of goods and diversifying it, developing service activities and improving their quality.

— Policies should be worked out to protect and encourage artisans, those practising traditional crafts, and highly-skilled self-employed people.

Study tours should be organized for their benefit at home and abroad; conferences of craftsmen should be held; training in those crafts should be available in vocational classes in general-education schools.

We should improve our financial and credit policies and operations in order to provide State assistance to small-scale commodity production, give it financial autonomy, and put it on an equal footing with other economic sectors.

We should make public the various kinds of taxes, the rates for those taxes and other contributions for the next five years.

We should reduce the gap between the interest rate of State loans and that for savings deposits in State banks with regard to individual producers; devise convenient bank formalities for them.

— We should have equal and equitable social policies for those engaged in small-scale commodity production. We should study ways to ensure labour safety and social security for their benefit.

— We should promulgate laws regulating the control of activities of individual producers in order to prevent arbitrary searches of their houses and properties, reassure them, and encourage them to invest capital and technique into the development of production.

— We should promulgate well-coordinated and attractive policies in order to encourage overseas Vietnamese to take direct or indirect part in national construction and development. ●

Producing basketry for export.

Photo: CAM BINH

HANOI IN EARLY 1987: FACTS AND REFLECTIONS

Life is a complex process of change. It would be too bold an attempt to try to draw a complete picture of the changes happenning in Hanoi following the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. One may, however, perceive the main lines of evolution.

Difficulties Are Many

People are generally agreed that Vietnam is going through a difficult time. "Facing the truth", the 10th Congress of the Hanoi Party organisation and the 6th National Party Congress made a profound analysis of the situation and the reasons — both objective and especially subjective — for the difficulties encountered. A new strategic approach has been mapped out and concrete measures are being experimented with. New hopes have been raised but there must be no room for wishful thinking. Hanoians have learnt the hard way to be wary of illusions. In fact, the hard times are far from over and the situation has even worsened in some respects.

The winter of 1986-87 was unusually warm. Man enjoyed the weather but the rice crop suffered. In the suburban villages, 2,240 hectares of rice seedlings, almost half the total sown area, matured too fast, and 35% of the rice area was threatened with crop failure. The most optimistic estimates put possible losses at one-third of the harvest even with the best care. The price of rice on the free market has soared: 60, 70 then 90 *dong* a kilo.

Consumer goods are scarce. Illicit dealers and black marketeers are on the rampage. The purchasing power of the *dong* continues to shrink. Wage-earners try to make both ends meet by hook or by crook. Honest people exhaust themselves doing overtime work while malefactors amass fortunes.

Let us examine a "neighbourhood group" of Hang Trong ward in down town Hanoi. Headed by one Mr Nguyen Van To, it comprises 58 households totalling 260 persons, 90 of whom are workers and public employees, 16 members of handicraft cooperatives, and 26 pensioners. They differ greatly in their life-style and income. Some are rather well-to-do, but most approach the poverty line. There are happy families but some are so only on the surface. Others are racked by quarrels, and a few have at least one of their members in prison. Most families of workers and public employees are really hard up. They have to do something on the side: repairing radio and television sets, making pastry to sell to streetside tea counters, making clothes, doing embroidery or lacework... Some are fairly well off thanks to remittances sent by relatives — overseas Vietnamese or people with employment abroad. Some, though officially listed as public employees, are living in opulence by Vietnamese standards: expensive furniture, stereos, motorbikes and the like. These are traffickers in disguise. One example: a family of seven has none of its members with a regular job. Yet they live more comfortably than most public servants. The mother is a dealer in readymade and second-hand clothes at Cho Troi — the open-air flea market of Hanoi — with her daughter as assistant, while the father just stays home. Several of the children take private music lessons (*Hanoi Moi*, Feb. 13, 1987).

A few interpolations will provide us with a composite picture of Hanoi marked by polarisation between rich and poor, between toilers and parasites. Here are some of the major social problems:

— Production is far from satisfying the needs of society;

— Average income is too small and the diet of the working people too meagre;

— Tens of thousands of people are unemployed or underemployed: young people having reached working age; elderly people still physically capable of work...

— Social injustice is rife.

Those are glaring flaws and all, from the man in the street to the city leaders, see them and discuss them,

Where to Begin?

The problems which Hanoi and the rest of the country are facing call for a new socio-economic strategy. This strategy was worked out at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the keynote being to abolish the bureaucratic system of centralized management and to build new economic mechanisms which would release the creative powers of the masses. In fact, Hanoi and the rest of the country are full of potentials for economic and social development. The question is how to effect a breakthrough and take the situation out of the mire as soon as possible.

Of late, there has been a great deal of talk about "renovation" and "new thinking". In the daily *Hanoi Moi* (New Hanoi) not a day passes without some reports about "renovation": renovation in the State-owned enterprises, in handicraft cooperatives, in various branches of activity and in departments of the city administration. Efforts are being made to increase the rate of utilization of the capacity of industrial enterprises, which now stands at around 50 per cent; to utilize locally available raw and other materials; to give more financial and marketing autonomy to production units; to expand the service industries; to combat negative phenomena in all spheres of activity. Some methods appear to be fairly audacious but they are in fact based on careful calculations. For instance, to cut losses in this Spring rice crop the Hanoi Leadership, after consultations with noted agronomists, decided to have all the defective rice seedlings rooted up and replaced by newly-grown plants. This bold decision was supported by appropriate incentives. For instance, wherever defective rice plants were rooted up and replaced, and if the soil there was to be ploughed by government-owned tractors, the cooperatives would not have to pay the costs in paddy. The cooperatives were supplied with new seeds and more fertilizers to be paid for only at harvest. In case of crop failure they would have nothing to pay. A bitter struggle took place. One has to wait until harvest time to assess the merits of those measures but in any case they were without precedent.

Initial change has also been observed in State-owned industry. A number of factories have been chosen as pilot units to test the regime of autonomy decided upon by the Party Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers. The targets assigned to these factories are more flexible to allow them to react in time to the conjuncture. The results have been positive in most cases.

Meanwhile, production of products to be exported through contract signed with foreign countries has been promoted. The garment-making factory X. 10, the biggest of its kind in Hanoi, is "making earnest preparations to execute the contracts and will strive to meet the targets in both quantity and quality on schedule", according to Trinh Van Ngan, its deputy director. As for the shoes and leather enterprises, never have they seen "such a bold production policy and such a far-reaching direction for development in both the short and the long term" as set in the 1986 — 90 plan: export figures will total 290 million units valued at about 600 million roubles.

Neither has the small-industry and handicrafts sector remained static in its planned production of consumer and export goods.

It must be pointed out, however, that those are only initial steps. However promising the prospects, there remain a thousand snarls to unravel, the sequels of a bureaucratic system of management that has prevailed for decades. Meanwhile, new difficulties have cropped up, especially rising prices and runaway inflation. As admitted by the director of the Hanoi Food Processing Factory, improvements at his factory have only touched the "input" (planning, materials supply, wages...) while market forces still hold sway over the "output" (marketing). In not a few cases the value of the "output" falls below that of the "input". Even at the "input" end, problems still abound, for instance, concerning the supply of materials and energy, and especially the wage system. Present wages fail to ensure the simple reproduction of the labour force. Prices, wages and money remain a burning problem and failure to solve it would negate the effect of any economic measure that might be taken. Unfortunately, this problem is beyond the jurisdiction of Hanoi. Understandably, the present measures are only probing steps. The general mood is one of guarded optimism.

Among the economic measures adopted by Hanoi since the beginning of this year and aimed at a "breakthrough" mention should be made of the broadening of private undertakings in both manufacturing and service industries. On February 21, 1987 a resolution was made public entitled "Regulations on incentives to private production and services". Henceforward, all persons able to work may apply for a license to engage in a productive or service occupation, naturally within the framework of the law. This also applies to government factory and office employees provided they do not infringe government time or use public property. Private citizens are allowed to hire up to five persons for their businesses. This policy is a correct and necessary one not only for the present time but for many years to come: it will release potential productive forces among the population and create more material wealth for society, thereby, helping to solve the two major problems of Hanoi at present, namely the creation of more jobs and improvement of the people's livelihood.

This policy is a vivid manifestation of the new "economic thinking". It is a complete departure from the antiquated idea that the more we reduce the private economic sector and expand the State economic sector the better, even though conditions are not ripe for doing so. The fact is also ignored that private economic undertakings are still necessary in certain domains, and will benefit production and the people's life.

Hanoi's huge potentials in this field have thus remained largely untapped.

As expected, the new policy has immediately aroused great interest. In all districts and wards discussions are held between wives and husbands, parents and children, and neighbours among themselves, concerning the newly opened opportunities. In Cho Dua ward for instance, many families think of opening shops making pails, basins, window frames, etc., from scrap iron, or sandals, hand bags, etc., from scrap plastics. But here as in other places, the mood remains one of wait-and-see. Doubts are lingering in people's minds. They don't take the policy at face value. For decades they have lived with a bureaucratic and authoritarian system of management and suffered from vexatious practices. So, they ask: "Is this going to last? Or is this only a flash in the pan? Shall we have to close down before long and be invited to join "State-private" ventures? Shall we be regarded as new "entrepreneurs" if we employ a few workers?, etc.

Said Nguyen Van Phuc, head of the Quan Luc production collective in Hang Bong Street, which specializes in making art objects for export:

"No doubt, the policy will release productive forces. But our biggest worry is whether such departments as the police, the tax collectors, the bank, the market management committee... will seriously implement it. Won't they continue to impose their own laws in spite of the new regulations, thus impeding any move in the new direction?"

In any event one thing is certain: the road has been opened and even stronger steps will be taken. In the past Hanoi has had bitter experiences with the damage that half-measures can do to the economy and the people's life.

The Crux of the Matter: Competent and Honest Officials

Hardship is a fact of life in Hanoi. But the strain does not stem from economic difficulties alone. Crying social inequities are like so many thorns in the side of honest people. While the majority of the Hanoians are living on a bare subsistence level, not a few are living in clover in defiance of all moral norms. They belong to two main categories: the speculators, smugglers, hoarders on the one hand, and the degenerate cadres on the other, especially those in economic organs. These two categories have become the enemy of the people, the enemy of socialism. As pointed out at the 10th congress of the Hanoi Party branch as well as at the 6th National Party Congress, the Party and State organs have for too long relaxed proletarian dictatorship and given those elements a free rein. The large-scale contraband undertaken by the personnel of the Hanoi Shipping Company, soon to be brought to trial, is a case in point. A sizable number of incompetent and corrupt cadres remain in State organs. Failure to remove and punish them has negated measures directed against the thieves and smugglers.

So, to purify the Party and State apparatus is the prerequisite of any large-scale house cleaning. In this respect, encouraging signs have been detected. In 1986, according to the control commission of the Hanoi Party Committee in 99 per cent of the cases, economic offences were sanctioned; of those cases 49 per cent involved officials holding responsible posts, 23 per cent more than in 1985 (*Hanoi Moi*, February 3, 1987). Of course, much remains to be done in this respect. It is not enough to remove the corrupt elements; one must also appoint honest and capable men and women to important posts. There have been a series of important personnel charges at various echelons. It is still too early to predict what will result from them. But in any event the reorganisation and strengthening of the apparatus will be directed toward renovation, which is now an irreversible trend. Both the leadership and the population have recognized its imperative character and have shown their resolve to enforce it.

LUONG DAN

HANOI: TOWARDS INNOVATION

On 21 February 1987, the Hanoi People's Committee issued five interim regulations on

1. Promoting private production, the family economy and the supply of services;

2. Encouraging the application of scientific and technical progress to production;

3. Expanding the supply of foods and agricultural products to the capital;

4. A number of regimes for retired office and factory workers;

5. Certain responsibilities of administrative offices vis-à-vis the population.

These regulations relating to the living conditions of many sections of the population are aimed at implementing the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and the Tenth Congress of the Party's city branch, and at paving the way for the solution of two important problems: creating more employment, and improving the people's living conditions. They will encourage people to engage in the production of commodities and thereby improve the general standard of living. They will settle problems left unsolved by the old system of management and release unused potentialities in materials, labour, mental power and capital existing in the various strata of the population.

The first regulation stipulates: "All citizens, including public servants either in active service or retired, are encouraged to develop production and supply services." The incentives include

— tax exemption for the first year;

— supply by the State trade of certain materials, equipment, and accessories;

— Free marketing of products;

— Bank loans and opening of bank accounts;

— Producers of export goods may use part of their foreign currency earnings to import materials.

The second regulation stipulates: "Scientific and technical workers (individuals or groups) who introduce innovations or scientific progress into the production of consumer goods and turn out high-quality goods for home consumption or for export are entitled to receive for one year 15—20% of the profits derived from such application (to be paid by the unit using the innovations)" and "the new products turned out by scientific and technical workers using self-supplied materials may be freely marketed at prices fixed by themselves and are exempted from taxes for one year. Production units may acquire patents at agreed prices for mass production".

The above regulations are the beginning of a process of renovation. ●

GOING TO THE PEOPLE

Changing one's thinking involves having a new conception of the people, the true masters of the country. Visiting the places where they live and work is the duty of responsible leaders, who must attentively listen to them...

On the 57th founding anniversary of the Party (3 February 1987) the Party Secretariat issued a directive calling on leaders in all branches and at all levels, from the district upward, to frequently visit the grassroots and learn about their problems. This decision has been warmly hailed by both the working people and the cadres at the local level.

In July 1986, talking to an investigative team from the Centre, leaders of Ung Hoa district (Ha Son Binh province) earnestly requested that leaders from the Centre come often to meet the people. A standing member of the district Party Committee told me:

"Whenever leading cadres came to this district, even when they went down to some villages, they usually met local cadres, not the people. Yet, it is at the village and hamlet level that government policies fully show their good and bad points. The peasants, who constitute the majority of the population in our district, have met with difficulties stemming from ill-advised government policies, and also from the doings of bad, inefficient local cadres. It is our wish that cadres from the higher levels should come and meet the people and not be content with talking to cadres only. In quite a few places there is a broad gap between the people and the cadres. While the former have to buy agricultural materials at cut-throat prices, the latter pay only very little for the same. They even get some surplus which their wives go and sell at the market. The same with industrial goods: village and district cadres can buy them in priority and they always get the best of everything. Therefore, only through talking to the people can one see both sides of the picture. When we report positive facts, our superiors will readily accept them; but the happening of negative phenomena will not be believed. When they happen officials at higher levels will think that we are short-sighted and pessimistic; that we seek to magnify our difficulties in order to require more materials from the State or to pay lower prices for them; that we unduly support the farmers' demand for higher prices for their agricultural products. Only if cadres from the Centre, including Party and State leaders, go to the bases and see with their own eyes how the people live and work, only if they listen to their grievance will they understand the situation and correctly assess the truthfulness of our reports." He added: "As a journalist, you certainly know that whenever cadres from the higher levels come to meet the local people in a formal way, the latter will not open their hearts to them. They will weigh their words carefully in order not to displease the local cadres. It is not always easy to get people to speak their minds."

I fully agree with him. It is one thing to meet the people but quite another to get the truth from them. Many cadres from the higher level will candidly inform local cadres of the day and hour of their arrival and ask them to arrange meetings with people in the fields and in their homes. It is then easy for local cadres to stage-manage everything. Provincial, district and village cadres accompanying the delegation will have selected a few families to whom they will have told in advance what they must say to the delegation. Likewise, they will have instructed people in the fields to give the right answers to its questions. In this way no grievances will be aired.

A leading cadre who visits the bases in this way will only see show-cases through rose-tinted spectacles. In some places people are ordered by the local officials to stay at home instead of going to work in the fields. They will clean their houses and furniture and if need be, will be loaned such things as chairs, tea-sets, thermos flasks and table cloths, which will be returned to the committee as soon as the visit is over. The visitors can be deceived in a thousand ways. No wonder that some higher-level cadres will refuse to believe truthful reports and sometimes become prejudiced against their authors.

Such "fact-finding trips" only lead to self-delusion as the higher-level cadres satisfy themselves that the people live rather well and seem quite happy. Some leading cadres at the Centre as well as in the provinces thus cannot stomach the truth and will not believe the reports and newspaper articles which reflect it.

A driver with 15 years' service in a department thus describes the way its cadres visit the grassroots: they will mostly attend conferences at the provincial capital, sometimes at the district centres, rarely at villages, if at all. Yet they are regularly promoted to higher posts. He eventually remarked:

CHANGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Basing itself on the equipment available, the cadres' managerial ability and the workers' skills, the Textile Trust has carried out a division of tasks, entrusting the making of highgrade fabrics, export articles, and consumer goods to various enterprises under its jurisdiction. It has redefined the size of each enterprise to suit its cadres' managerial ability. Some are split into independent smaller factories directly attached to the Trust. One has been disbanded. A company specializing in export goods has been set up. Measures have been taken to ensure supply of local materials and reduce transport costs.

Implementing (draft) Resolution 306 of the Political Bureau, the textile industry has carried out a comprehensive division of responsibilities. The Trust takes charge of economic-administrative management. The enterprises enjoy complete autonomy in production, trading and re-equipment. Many workshops have their own systems of accounting. Manpower is redistributed. Many enterprises work in three or four shifts to make full use of their equipment. The workers thus have a longer rest in which to look after their families and study.

Starting in October 1985 the Trust's managerial machinery is divided into three sections: economic, operational, and scientific-technical. At the level of the enterprise, technical cadres are to maintain close ties with the workshop, participate in production, gather data on the spot, and give them timely treatment. The Trust has replaced a number of incompetent directors. A competition has been held among managerial cadres. Short and long-term plans have been worked out for personnel training. In late 1986 the pay system has been perfected to ensure proper real wages for the workers, stimulate production, and maintain labour discipline. In planning work application has been made of the experiences of the Thanh Cong, Dong A, Dong Phuong and Nam Dinh enterprises. The mills now base themselves on their own specific conditions to draw up their production plans. Provinces with weaving enterprises on their territories participate in the drawing up of an overall plan for the whole industry, thus ensuring unity between branch and territorial management. However, despite the progress made, there still remain snags due to defective guidance and coordination. Raw materials are either received from suppliers for processing, bought with the industry's funds, or obtained through the export of products. Over the past few years, the industry has cooperated with the provinces of Phu Khanh, Thuan Hai, Lam Dong and Nghia Binh to build areas specializing in cotton growing and mulberry and silk-worm raising. In 1986, 5,000 tonnes of cotton and 20 tonnes of silk yarn were procured in this way.

The textile industry has sought to apply technical progress, ensure equipment maintenance and make in-depth investment. It has striven to restore, upgrade and complete its equipment and to manufacture spare parts in place of imported ones. In 1986, the industry mobilized 84.6% of its capacity in spinning machines and 92.4% in weaving looms. This marked great progress from 1981. The industry is making great efforts to improve product quality and diversify its production in order to better serve home consumption and export. To this end both technical measures and economic levers are used. Many lines of products have continued to be awarded quality labels.

VIET NHAN

"Strange but true. Although to stand aloof from the people is the most serious mistake a Communist can make, although the first criterion by which his merits are to be judged is whether he keeps in touch with the people, at present many cadres who stay away from the masses and spend their time attending meetings and following courses, are commended and promoted while others, who regularly visit the bases, talk to the people and keep in close contact with production bases, are rarely promoted to higher posts, particularly those of them who report the truth to their superiors."

During a recent visit to the Giang Vo Fair — Exhibition, I met the deputy chief-of-staff of a provincial People's Committee who was in charge of the province's stand. I asked him what he thought of the Party Secretariat's recent directive calling on leading cadres at all levels to pay frequent visits to the grassroots. "I have carefully read it," he answered. "I am both glad and worried. Now that management is based on economic accounting and budgetary subsidies are no longer available, government offices at higher levels must issue policies suited to the fast-changing situation. For this purpose, comrades at the higher levels must visit the bases — but not in the perfunctory way they were used to. True, district guest-houses are rather uncomfortable to say nothing of the villages. Some comforts are necessary to preserve the health of higher cadres. But in any event leading cadres must be in close contact with the people if they are to know their true conditions. Every now and then they should live the life of ordinary toilers and share their hardships."

THAI DUY

RENOVATION OF TRADE-UNION ACTIVITIES

PHAM THE DUYET

Trade unions operate among workers and State employees whose qualifications, psychology, occupations and composition have undergone great changes during the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism, and the situation now requires proper assessment.

The prolonged operation of the system of bureaucratic subsidy-based management has not only undermined our economy, but also brought about negative phenomena in the mentality and lifestyle of workers and State employees. Reliance on State subsidies and apathy in labour have prevailed, initiative, imagination and the workers' sense of organization and discipline have not been encouraged. If these are not overcome, great obstacles will stand in the way of the implementation of new policies and new mechanisms of economic management.

Renovation must take place from top to bottom, extend from Party and State organs to mass organizations, and it must pervade all fields of social activities. It must be led by the working class to whom history has entrusted the vanguard role in the revolution. The infrastructure and conditions of industrial production create favourable conditions for it to fulfil this task. Labour in general and industrial labour in particular is by nature dynamic and creative, and does not tolerate sluggishness and conservatism.

We must renovate our thinking, our economic thinking in the first place, because it plays a decisive role. This must involve not only Party and State cadres, but also trade-union cadres. Obsolete ideas must be replaced by new ones which conform to the economic laws governing the initial stage of the transition to socialism. Mistakes in methods and operations must be overcome. Trade-union cadres must have an accurate perception of the content of economic development and socialist transformation and of the new system of economic management in the remaining years of that stage. They should also see the objective necessity of abolishing the bureaucratic subsidy-based system of management and shifting to economic accounting and the socialist mode of enterprise. At the same time they should acquire a proper and more practical knowledge of the present function of trade unions.

So far, in both thought and action there has been a tendency to mechanically apply the whole conception of the functions of socialist trade unions to the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism. Hence the vague guidelines, simplistic forms of action, and inaccurate evaluations. The tasks laid down have not corresponded to the country's practical capabilities and level of development in their extent, scale and conditions of execution. Due to the absence of a correct and complete analysis of the characteristics of the working class in the present stage and due to a simplistic and "idealized" view of the unity of interests between the State and the workers, we have failed to accomplish our function of educating and tempering workers and State employees while protecting their legitimate interests.

In the years ahead, as the economic policies undergo a process of renovation and serious vestiges of bureaucratism remain, trade-unions must, besides their education of the workers and participation in economic management and State administration, attach great importance to protecting the legitimate interests of workers and State employees, and supervising the operations of State organs. The performance of these functions should serve the movement to purify the Party, heighten its fighting capacity, purify State organs and raise their efficiency, check and eliminate negative manifestations.

Trade unions should renovate their methods of action in order to draw ever more workers into the socialist emulation movement and cause them to participate in social activities. One may ask: Why is it that trade-union members, workers and State employees no longer feel as closely attached to the trade unions as they did in the past? Whence that "cold wind blown" into the "warm atmosphere of the trade unions?" Why is it that many regulations on trade-union rights have not been enforced? Isn't it because the trade unions have not truly fulfilled their role as representatives of the working people, because they have worked bureaucratically and have been divorced from their members' aspirations and living conditions? Now the view that "the people are the roots" and the watchword of "let the people know about, discuss, perform and supervise public affairs" must be concretized and institutionalized in the management of all State organs and enterprises and in trade-union activities. There

(Continued on page 31)

AN END TO SCATTERED INVESTMENT IN CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

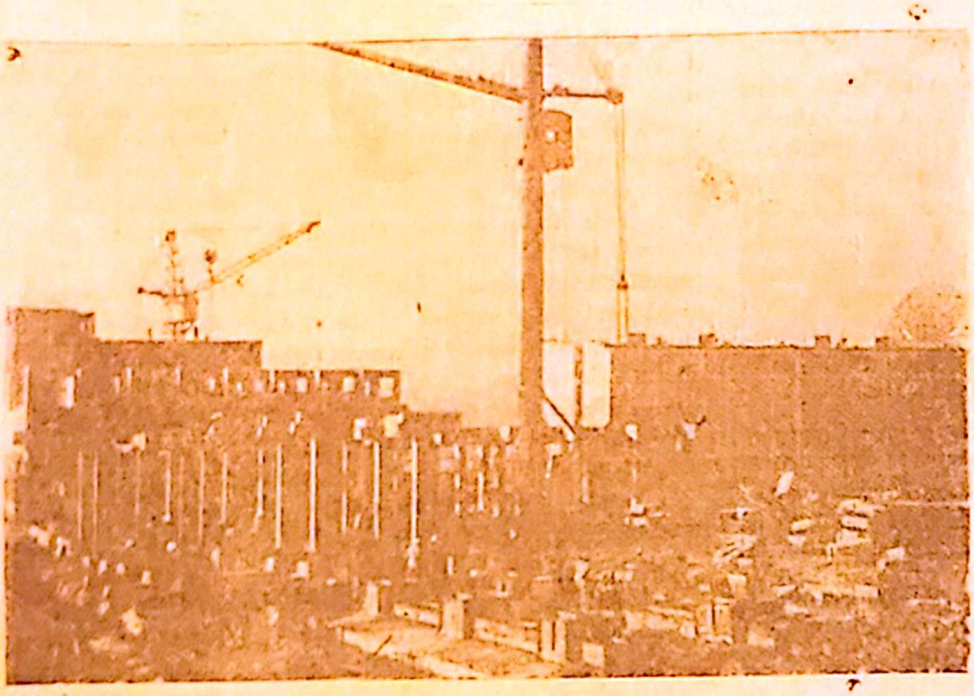
Our investments for capital construction are still scattered. Many projects are left unfinished and efficiency is low. Our shortcomings in this field stem from many causes, including a neglect of planning.

The time has come for us to work out a strategy of urbanization in order to remedy the state of dispersal and bad coordination of investment, which has led to the "rustication of towns" or the "urbanization of rural areas".

To help stabilize and improve the people's living standards one should organize functional areas in the towns: recreation, tourism, beauty spots, cultural traditions, protection of the environment, fight against pollution, protection of sources of natural wealth, water, land, air. Planning should serve the building of major economic and social projects: industry, agriculture, forestry, fishery, land reclamation; the reshaping or building of cities, towns, townlets, industrial areas, areas specialized in agriculture, forestry, fishery, State farms, logging camps, and economic, cultural, educational centres...

Quite a lot has been achieved in planning, but shortcomings are still many, due to our lack of practicality and failure to grasp both the general laws of socialist urbanization and the specific traits of given localities. Many projects have laid undue stress on long-term targets in disregard of actual possibilities. Technical norms are set too high, the volume of construction too big. In many cases, our planners have failed to grasp the characteristics of our country's economic development and to solve the relationship between long-term planning and short-term planning and so have failed to help the localities coordinate State-planned construction with construction through "parallel efforts of the State and the people", and "the people's own efforts". Planning is unduly influenced by theoretical considerations of architectonics and foreign methodologies, norms and criteria. There has been a tendency to urbanize rural areas, State farms and townlets, which is not congruent with the actual conditions prevailing in our country.

Planning is a comprehensive scientific-technical endeavour, an art requiring deep knowledge not only



Building blocks of flats for workers of the Hoa Binh hydro project.
Photo: HA MUI

of one's speciality but also of sociology, psychology, physiology and economics as well. In order to make a practical contribution to the implementation of the three major economic programmes (production of food, consumer goods and export goods) mapped out by our Party, planning of capital construction should concentrate on the following fields:

Although planning does not directly produce food, consumer goods and export goods, it has the task of transforming material-technical bases and building new ones together with public welfare projects aimed at improving the working people's living standards and increasing productivity. In this it should display foresight. Initial planning must be linked to comprehensive planning and allow the localities to draw up a realistic plan of investment and manage construction work as it proceeds. On the outskirts of town arable land should not be wasted so that a food-producing belt could be set up besides capital construction projects.

In the countryside, many changes have taken place since the product-based contract system was put into operation. Planning of construction should help the cooperatives build their own plans of investment. At present, most communes already have worked out a comprehensive socio-economic plan, a land-use plan and a water conservancy plan, but the problem of communications still has to be solved. In many communes, although roads have been built for trucks and tractors to reach the co-op's headquarters and storehouses, there are not enough roads in the fields for farmers' carts. Many of them still have to use shoulder poles. So better transport and communications must be ensured in the countryside.

Another major problem is that of housing and public-interest projects. In the countryside, each family usually lives on the ancestral plot of land. Now the population has increased, but the land available has not. So hedges have been replaced by brick-walls to save space; rooftop terraces have been built to serve as drying-yards; and two-storeyed houses have replaced one-storeyed ones. In many places, arable land has had to be allotted for housing construction. Thus, our planners should design rational models of houses and devise solutions to problems of fuel, sewers, greenery...

Regarding regional planning, facts have shown that close relations exist between the localities from the village upward, conducive to cooperation and mutual support. Hence planning encompassing whole districts, provinces and several provinces will make those relations even closer and reinforce the potentials for investment in capital construction.

TRONG NGUYEN

TELEPHONE SERVICE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

As part of the change in the system of management, the Postal Service in Ho Chi Minh City recently decided to set up a Telephone Company by merging three units: the Telephone Exchange, the Company of Postal Works, and the Designing Team. Many positive changes have occurred only four months later.

In the past, owing to the management system based on State subsidies, the telephone network was in a bad state, including the Exchange, the cable network and the subscribers' sets. Designing, maintenance, and repair were kept separate, and subscribers suffered delays because of red tape. From two months to one year would pass before their sets were installed. Negative phenomena occurred. The Telephone Centre required each subscriber to pay 225 *dong* a month regardless of whether his telephone-set was in working order or not. Before 1984, out of the 35,000 sets in operation in the City 10,000 were not working. In the inner City, 20 out of the 29 telephone cable lines were in bad repair.

After the merger, designing, installation, maintenance and repair are closely connected. The Company has re-organized its services, now comprising three administrative sections and eight units making up three telephone stations, in Saigon, Gia Dinh and Cho Lon. It has also set up a cable brigade, a wire brigade, an exchange brigade, an engineering factory and a welfare unit. Cadres are appointed on the basis of their professional abilities, and young personnel have been boldly promoted. Guidance and operation have been improved, with the general director giving direct instructions to the station chiefs and to the heads of brigades and teams. In the afternoon of each day, team leaders will report on the work done by filling a statistical form, noting the reasons for delays and failures. The teams are granted initiative and autonomy. The leadership closely controls their activities and enhances their members' sense of responsibility. The workers receive regular refresher training.

Priority is accorded maintenance, followed by repair. Each worker is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 80 handsets each of which should not be out of order more than twice a month. A subscriber who does not use his telephone-set in any given month does not have to pay anything. Besides its own main exchanges, the Company manages over 400 subscribers' exchanges and 8,000 individual hand-sets, which are divided into sectors for easier maintenance and repair.

At present, there are in the City more than 20,000 telephone-sets in good working order. An average of only 300 need some repair each month, as against 4,000 — 5,000 formerly.

Now, the installation of a new telephone-set or the transfer of an existing one to a new location takes but 7 — 15 days. Negative phenomena have decreased sharply, so have subscribers' grievances. Meanwhile, the workers' living standards have steadily improved due to rising incomes.

DO TAN HIEP

THE TREATMENT OF GOITRE IN THE HIGHLANDS WITH IODIZED SALT

Professor DANG TRAN DUE
Head of the Central Endocrinologie Hospital

The Use of Iodized Salt Is the Beat Way to Prevent Goitre

Iodized salt is table salt mixed with iodine. It is used to prevent goitre and cretinism. The treatment, adopted through the traditional medical experience of Asian and Latin American countries, has rested on ever firmer scientific grounds.

By using modern biomedical methods it has been clearly demonstrated that goitre and cretinism are due to iodine deficiency. A pregnant woman suffering from it will experience severe thyroid deficiency and her child will be affected with cretinism.

Cretinism is defined by the World Health Organization as a disease due to iodine deficiency and is related to goitre. This condition is marked by physical and mental stunting and inability to work normally. The patient may fall victim to oedema, deafness, dumbness, and paralysis.

In many areas of developing countries large numbers of people are still suffering from goitre and cretinism.

The following preventive measures are recommended by the World Health Organization:

1. In areas with more than 10 per cent of the population affected with goitre everybody must take iodized salt.

2. Areas with more than 30 per cent of the population goitrous and with many cases of cretinism must urgently adopt that preventive measure.

3. Preventive measures must be safe and extend continuously over long periods.

4. Thyroid deficiency must be quickly detected and treated in new-born babies.

Prevention through the use of iodized salt is the best and cheapest method. Iodized salt was known more than 60 years ago as a preventive drug in goitre but only industrially-developed countries can produce it easily, while developing countries meet with many difficulties in this field due to the large number of people affected; the lack of specialized organizations, of medical cadres in the highlands, and of facilities to produce iodized salt; the neglect of educational and propaganda work which fails to reach the disease-ridden remote highlands...

Iodized oil can also be used in injection, but it has to be imported and injections must be repeated every three or four years.

The Production of Iodized Salt in Vietnam

In Vietnam, about 7 million people live in the highlands and a large population are subject to goitre (18 — 80 per cent of the population). Many goitrous people suffer from complications. About one million need urgent treatment.

Cretinism affects many areas. In some villages 1 — 6 per cent of the people undergoing medical check-ups show signs of it. In many villages, about 10 per cent of school children have to give up their studies. They will soon relapse into illiteracy.

Every year, the highlands must be supplied with about 42,000 tonnes of iodized salt and this over long periods of time. However, the production of iodized salt in our country meets with many difficulties. Unrefined salt is easily damaged by damp. Owing to heat and moisture, potassium iodide is easily destroyed. For the large-scale production of iodized salt we lack energy, packing materials and transport means.

And so we have decided to advance step by step. First, we have replaced potassium iodide with potassium iodate, which is manually mixed with table salt using a wooden mixer. The product is then packed in hemp bags. Later we may use mechanical mixers and better packing material. Finally, iodized salt will be produced by means of modern equipment.

Manually-mixed iodized salt, used experimentally in two localities in Tuyen Quang and Hoa Binh provinces from 1971 to 1974, reduced goitre incidence by about 10 per cent each year.

It is easy to make, but must be used within six months and consequently has to be produced in the provinces themselves.

Results and Prospects

After that successful trial iodized salt has been produced on a large scale in the Northern highland provinces since 1975 and in five Central provinces and the Central Highlands since 1980. By late 1984 more than 2 million people had used it, ten times as many as at the beginning. The salt produced covers about 25 — 30 per cent of the requirements. Wherever it has been used continuously, goitre incidence has sharply decreased — by 15 — 25% in the case of people with small goitres. The method is highly appreciated by highlanders and also by foreign specialists. The World Health Organization has had a film made about it.

Nevertheless, difficulties cropped up in 1979 — 1982. Although over 2 million people needed preventive measures each year, there was not enough salt available, only about 2kg per person a year. In that period production facilities in the border provinces were destroyed by Chinese expansionist troops, and medical stations and equipment were lacking. From 1982 to 1984 we made vigorous efforts in this field (equipment, personnel training, financing) and

(Continued on page 27)

THE SWEET-SOUNDING BAMBOO

Illustration by CONG QUOC HA

The bamboo has been part of the flora of Vietnam for thousands of years. In the legend on the Child Hero of Giong village, it is said that when his iron lance broke, the hero uprooted an entire cluster of bamboos and used it to strike at the enemy. Indeed, rudimentary weapons made of bamboo — sticks, spears and spikes — were used quite effectively during the recent wars of resistance against the French colonialists and the US imperialists. Bamboo used to be the main construction material in the countryside, and is still being used widely for many household articles. Bamboo and allied species have also been used since time immemorial to make musical instruments.

Mention should be made first of the flute. There is a wide range of bamboo flutes. Most are of the tranverse type, some are provided with a reed. The number of holes varies from one region to another. Among the Viet, the six-hole or ten-hole flute is common. The flute played by the H'mong has a lower warmer tone, suggesting an echo heard in the jungle. Other flutes are the *tam lay* of the Thai, the *co le* of the Lo Lo, the *pi pap* of the Nung, the *sao gao* of the Tay, and the *sao oi* of the Muong. The Thai also favour the *pi thuu*. Its soft sounds are perfect for a one-person audience. The *pi tot* of the Mekong River delta has only one hole. Present-day flutists, with improved instruments and technique and an enriched repertoire, have made the Vietnamese flute even more attractive. One of them, Dinh Thin, has performed in 27 countries.

The *t'rung* — the bamboo xylophone of the Central Highlands — has become a regular feature of modern Vietnamese music. When it first appeared in professional bands years ago the *t'rung* had the appeal of a rare wild flower. Ever since, music-lovers have not ceased to marvel at its cascading notes, which evoke now the babbling of a stream or the chirping of birds, now the roar of a fall or a storm. Both the instrument and the method of playing have benefited a great deal from improvements by Do Loc, Mai Lien, Xuan Nhung and other players. At the beginning there were only 16 tubes in a *t'rung*. Now the number has increased to 40 and even 50, and the tubes are arranged in decks. The five-tone scale has been replaced by 12 semitones, which makes it possible for the *t'rung* to better adapt itself to modern music. Also, a player now uses both ends of the sticks to strike at the tubes. In this way, chords can be played and a quicker rhythm achieved.

A close relative of the *t'rung* is the *klongput*. In playing the latter, however, sticks are not used. Instead the player creates an air current at the ends of the tubes by striking the palms of her cupped hands together. Popular *klongput* players are Kim Oanh, Mai Lien and Xuan Nhung.

There is also the *dingpa* in which air currents are blown into the tubes by means of flappers. The *dingpa* can be used to play modern music.

Last but not least is the *khen*, (panpipes) which consists of a series of small bamboo tubes whose number varies from one region to another. Its reedy, insistent sounds lend themselves very well to expressing the feelings of minority people living in the highlands.

TRUNG SON

HOBBIES FOR HANOIANS

A dwarf fig tree.

In Hanoi, the number of people who spend their leisure time caring for ornamental plants and trees, flowers, rocks, miniature landscapes, birds and other animals is estimated at around 500. This does not include the recent fad for small parrots, which many breed for export.

At the beginning of this year, those people have set up a club.

What is a "shaped tree"?

They are potted trees dwarfed by special methods of culture and bent into various shapes.

Formerly growers tended to give them the forms of animals. This made for uniformity and monotony. Today bonsai lovers display a great deal more imagination and prefer to give their dwarf trees the shapes of trees in the wild. This calls for a profound knowledge of our flora and constant exchanges of information and experience. Besides familiarity with mountain and forest vegetation, shaping a tree requires skill, taste and a certain aesthetic sense.

Some people achieve special effects by making their tree grow halfway up or on top of a rocky cliff, in which case the tree will be made to look as if it had weathered many storms.

Bonsai lovers are found in all sections of the population: workers, cooperative members, artisans, intellectuals, cadres... After a working day, it is a real pleasure for them to watch a "shaped tree" in a miniature landscape they have themselves arranged according to their individual taste.

Anecdotes about flowers

In a village on the bank of the Red River, there lived a peasant fond of planting ornamental flowers since his youth. He didn't give up his hobby when he grew old and blind. To his three daughters he had given the names of his preferred flowers. Tuberose, Orchid, and Chrysanthemum. One spring day, an artist visiting his garden asked him:

"Those pinks I see yonder must be of the fragrant kind?"

"I don't grow any pinks."

"I see some there, near the evergreens."

"You are mistaken, they're chrysanthemums".

The visitor needed not be ashamed, because he had simply lost his spectacles somewhere near the ferry.

On another occasion the horticulturist asked a painter:

"What kind of flowers look best in pictures?"

"It's difficult to say," the artist said, "as each flower has it own special kind of beauty but I've a preference for apricot blossoms."

Turning to another visitor, a writer, the horticulturist enquired:

"And what kind of flowers have pride of place in literature?"

"Iris and chysanthemum are described in Nguyen Du's verses."

"Can you tell me how long ago did men start using flowers as ornaments?"

The artists replied: "At least a millennium. In a history book I read that at a banquet held a thousand years ago for his warriors a woman general had the tables decorated with flowers and fruit. When I did a painting of her, I represented her holding flowers in one hand."

The peasant shook his head: "In my opinion flowers were loved by men as soon as they appeared on earth."

Songbirds

Songbird lovers are many in Hanoi. During the war of resistance to US aggression, US bombings destroyed a large number of villages together with their bamboo hedges, and the birds were deprived of their normal shelter. Besides, in the enlargement of the capital, the erection of multi-storeyed residential blocks has not been accompanied by a corresponding tree-planting campaign. Hence the growing affection for songbirds on the part of the city people. Birds are bought at markets in the uplands and highlands and taken to Hanoi for sale. Incidentally, such forest animals as deer, bears, and gibbons may sometimes be bought at such markets by amateurs.

New pets and plants

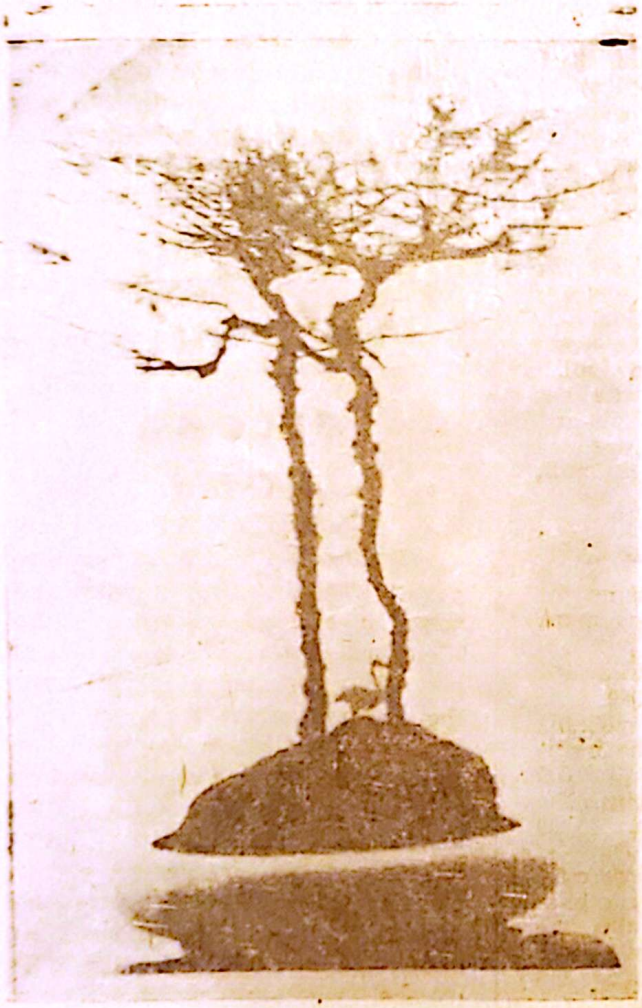
Ga tre (Bamboo fowls) come from Ben Tre and Ho Chi Minh City. A ten-year-old fowl will weigh less than a kilogram. It has long spurs and will stand motionless at the same place for days. It will crow at anytime of the day particularly in crowded places. A valued specimen will weigh only about 0.3 — 0.4 kg. Because of its elongated wings it looks somewhat like a swallow. Its plumage may be white, purple, etc. People keep it in a cage, on a rock or on a tree branch. Some people now keep *ga tre* gamecocks, which can fight doggedly for hours.

Cactuses

Some horticulturists have a weakness for cactuses. Their numbers are growing.

About 100 species of cactus can now be found in Hanoi. Some have been grown in the north for long but most have come from Ho Chi Minh City or been brought back by sailors. Cactus is particularly suited for growing on balconies, verandahs or the terrace roofs of residential blocks. Its various species are liked for their colours and shapes.

NHU MAO



A dwarf pine tree.

THE TREATMENT...

(Continued from page 24)

by late 1984, the number of people being supplied with iodized salt rose to more than 2 million, with an average of 4kg available to each.

* * *

In sum, the results are still modest compared with the requirement and progress has been slow compared with our possibilities. About two-thirds of our highlanders do not yet benefit from preventive measures against the disease. The remotest areas are not supplied with iodized salt at all.

The reason is that people in many localities have not yet fully understood that the eradication of the disease is both necessary and feasible.

To achieve more progress in the coming years we should enlarge the manual facilities and, set up more mechanized shops at provincial salt depots — each shop, turning out about 2,000 tonnes a year for the use of 300,000 — 350,000 people. Each workshop will need about 200 square metres of floor space, 20 workers and one technician.

Besides, we must make better use of the aid given by international organizations, and expand the use of iodized oil in injection in seriously affected areas.

DAIRY CATTLE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

To raise milch cows close to industrial and urban centres is the viewpoint adopted by the Ho Chi Minh Party Committee. A resolution to this effect has been implemented by the city's agricultural service since 1977. At that time, the main difficulty was the lack of brood animals: in the whole city there were only 80 cows issued from crossbreeding of local animals with those of Indian and Yersey strains. Animals of the Sind breed were few in number and mediocre in quality. High-grade pasture and a proper material-technical infrastructure were totally lacking.

Improvement of the Local Herd

At first, the City tried to get brood animals from the provinces and also from the North, but with poor results. Finally, the agricultural service decided to try to improve the local herd through crossing it with animals of the Sind breed to obtain a multipurpose strain (for draught power, meat, and milk). The offspring were crossed with a Dutch breed to obtain good milk producers. As a result, within 10 years the City managed to have more than 32,000 Sind crosses, of which 20,000 were subsequently crossed with Dutch animals. At present 300 Sind cows each give from 1,200 to 2,000 litres of milk in one cycle. All the cows in Tan Binh, Go Vap and Binh Thanh districts have been crossed with animals of the Sind breed. Thus, from now on, each year as many Dutch crosses will be obtained as the total number of animals born between 1977 and 1986.

Crossing with Dutch animals has been carried out in two ways: artificial insemination and direct use of Dutch oxen. At present, 40 Dutch oxen are being raised by private families, of which 30 have reached maturity. About 3,000 crossbred cows have been obtained of which 700 are yielding milk.

Breeding of Milch Cows by Private Families

The City plans to rear milch cows in all three economic sectors: State (4%) cooperative (2%) and private (94%). Three kinds of animals are bred in each sector: Sind crosses, Dutch crosses and Dutch oxen. Whereas, in the first years after liberation in 1975 only a few milch cows were reared privately, today the raising of dairy cattle has become a popular movement, particularly in Go Vap, Tan Binh and Hoc Mon districts. At present, more than 1,000 households are engaged in this occupation, their cows giving 5,000 litres of fresh milk each day on an average.

A Programme for the Period Extending to the Year 2,000

This year Ho Chi Minh City has adopted a big programme for raising dairy cattle. On the basis of past achievements, the programme bids fair to be a success.

The goal is to cover the city people's needs in fresh milk and export part of the products. The objective for the year 1990 is to have a herd of 10,000 head, of which 4,000 — 5,000 will be yielding milk, about 7,500 tonnes in total. By 1995 the herd will have increased to 30,000, of which 15,000 will be producing milk, about 30,000 tonnes in total. By the year 2000 the herd will have reached the figure of 50,000, of which 25,000 will be producing milk, about 60,000 tonnes in total.

To implement this programme, milch cows will have to account for 60% to 80% of the herd, the rest being constituted by multipurpose animals (draught power, meat and milk). Meanwhile, we shall have created a tropical strain of milch cows weighing from 350 kg to 400 kg apiece and giving in each cycle from 3,000 to 3,500 litres of milk on an average with 4% — 5% of butter content.

LE VAN NGAI

MOTHER-OF-PEARL INLAYING IN A DELTA VILLAGE

Wherever in Vietnam mother-of-pearl inlaying is a practised craft one will come across craftsmen native of Chuon village — a popular name for Chuyen My village in Phu Xuyen district, Ha Son Binh province.

In the central bay of Chuon's communal house one can see a vermilion-and-gold lacquerred panel bearing a commendation bestowed on Chuon craftsmen by a king of former times: "Your skills are as precious as gold."

Here is what an old craftsman named Diep, who as a young man had served in the imperial capital, told us:

"Tradition has it that mother-of-pearl inlaying was taught to the people of Chuon village by To Hien Thanh, a general of the Ly dynasty (11th-12th century), himself a native of Chuon. In the past centuries, about one-third of the villagers practised this trade at any one time.

"Mother-of pearl inlaying requires meticulous training. Besides, materials are by no means easy to come by. Mother-of-pearl is obtained from the inner layer of mollusc shells, but it must be got from the proper species and must show the proper iridescence. The best shells are found along the rivers of Nam Dinh, Phu Ly and Bac Giang in the North. The inner layers of those found in Nam Dinh have a rosy tint; those in Bac Giang are purple. One Nam Dinh kind is dark blue on one side and shows white veins on the other."

Old Diep showed us some rainbow-coloured bits of mother-of-pearl and went on:

"As a rule, the inlays must be a mix of mother-of-pearl obtained from various species, about two-thirds snails and one-third clams. The most difficult works are portraits, because of the rainbow effects which affect likeness to the models."

Other old artisans were busy at work beside a group of younger ones. The fingers of the bespectacled old men bore the scars of a multitude of cuts due to the knives and chisels they handle.

"Our trade calls for patience and imagination," old Diep went on. "We use a set of 12 files. We shape bamboo models of files which we give to the blacksmiths. The tools they make must be finished by ourselves. They are of various shapes: round, oval, flat like a leaf, grooved like a gouge, etc. At one time, a clever villager named Ba Trinh devised a saw which can replace five files. But it must be made of good quality steel. Besides those tools, one also uses drills and chisels."

A mollusc shell is sawn into small bits. The inner layer is peeled off and ground until it is paper thin. This is painstaking work. Then the craftsman draws an outline on the material and shapes it with a file. The bits of mother-of-pearl thus shaped are glued to the wood by means of lacquer. When the lacquer has dried, after three days, the inlays are polished and cuts are made with a knife. Then lacquer is rubbed into the incisions. More polishing is done with paddy husk; the wood is finally dyed red and polished."

In the old days, about 2,000 villagers practised the trade, with women doing ancillary work.

Near Chuon village, two villages, Gia Cau and Chuyen My Ha, specialized in making wooden furniture, some of which was sent to Chuon for inlaying with mother-of-pearl.

In former days, in the last months of the year, traders from Quang Nam and Quang Ngai used to sail north on big junks loaded with Phan Thiet fish sauce and wooden furniture. This they took to Chuon village for inlaying, then brought south to Saigon for sale to southern customers.

XUAN THU

THE PROBLEM OF OLD FOLK

SECOND HOME

Attending to the life of old folk, particularly of retired public servants, is a great concern of the Vietnamese State. For many years now, there have appeared all over the country various forms of activity and organization for this purpose. "Out-door physical exercise clubs" have been set up in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Every morning, their members gather together to practise exercises suitable to their old age. Other clubs specialize in the practice of national pugilism, brandishing of sticks and swords, or playing of badminton. In Hai Hung and Thai Binh provinces, a movement was launched a dozen years ago for the setting up of a *Quy bao tho* (Fund for the Protection of Old Age) in which the money pooled by aged people is invested in savings banks at an interest rate higher than the normal one. The yearly interest is used to organize pleasure trips and cultural activities, to help needy people, or to defray the expenses incurred for visits to sick members. This movement has spread all over the country and attracted over 4 million old people with a sum amounting to over 250 million *dongs*.

Over recent years, in many urban centres, in particular Ho Chi Minh City, there have appeared "retired public servants' clubs". Thousands of retired office and factory workers are now members of a dozen such clubs in Ho Chi Minh City. The club in District 3 is a typical example. It is located in a roomy and quiet house and receives the financial support of the district administration. Its 2,000 members, retired cadres and workers, meet there to hear topical news, attend theatrical performances or film shows, exchange views on daily life, or cultural and artistic subjects. In these clubs, soft drinks and canteen goods are served at fair prices for the benefit of the retired people. The clubs are also helped by twinned organizations which support part of the expenses incurred by their members.

The "retired public servant's clubs" are helping improve the living conditions of the old public servants who call them their "second home".

NGO THINH

Artificial flowers (Chrysanthemum).

A FAMILY OF FLOWER MAKERS

Near the flower market in Hang Luoc Street, Hanoi which meets each year at Tet, there is a brick house of ancient style marked by a roof with curved-up corners: it is the home of Mrs Doan Thi Thai, 72, a maker of artificial flowers. Her dexterous hands turn bits of coloured paper and silk into beautiful blossoms and bouquets.

Since the liberation of Hanoi in 1954, she and her family have been earning a comfortable living by signing contracts with the State Trade.

All ten members of the family have taken up this occupation: her children and grand-children in their off-hours and her husband, a retired cadre. They all excel in making paper and silk flowers, leaves, buds and also decorative lanterns.

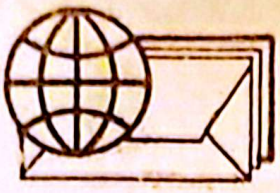
The flowers made by the family have been regularly prized at spring flower exhibitions. In 1974, Doan Thi Thai was praised as an "outstanding artisan" by the Hanoi people's committee and received an order for decorating the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum with artificial flowers. Greatly inspired by this honour, she made 79 splendid flowers (tuberose, rose, dahlia...) representing the 79 years of President Ho Chi Minh's life.

In her work, Mrs Thai is mainly helped by her youngest daughter, Mai Hanh, who, besides learning her mother's craft, has spent four years studying plastic arts.

A flower maker must have a thorough knowledge of the texture, shape, and hues of each species and show taste and discrimination in the choice of colours and materials. For instance, satin and velvet are good materials for pansy, not hibiscus. Orchids should be made of fairly thick materials...

Minh Hang, 9, Mai Hanh's eldest daughter, seems to have inherited the perseverance and dexterity of her grand mother and the aesthetic sense of her mother. Among the many awards and distinctions obtained by the family — resistance medals and certificates of merit — is a "Golden Hands" medal, testifying to their skills in the craft. Mai Hanh is also one of the few outstanding Hanoi artisans to have been sent to Mongolia to teach her art to our Mongolian friends.

NGU PHONG



From our Readers

As in the past, this year I've again subscribed to your review. I've been receiving it for over 20 years now. Thanks to my regular reading of Vietnam Courier over a long period of time, I've learnt to know your heroic country. I've twice attended the competition "What do you know about Vietnam?" organized by the Voice of Vietnam Radio and have been awarded prizes on both occasions.

Now that I've gained a fairly good command of the Vietnamese language, which allows me to read Vietnamese newspapers and reviews and to correspond in Vietnamese, I've found it easier to learn more about your country. I wish to express my gratitude to Vietnam Courier's editorial board for having sought to meet its readers' requests in a timely way and published news and stories answering their questions. I'm pleased to note that you have many friends throughout the world.

Now I would like to ask a few questions about the life of the Vietnamese people.

Your review has published some information about small hydro-power stations, an interesting subject. So in Vietnam the energy in small rivers is being actively put to use. Incidentally, in the Soviet Union after the Great Patriotic War, many small hydro-power stations were built. At present this has again become a topical problem in our country.

For this reason, I myself — and probably many of your other readers — wish to know more about the utilization of the power of small rivers in Vietnam. You may tell us something about how a small hydro-power station is built in Vietnam, the experience gained in operating such stations and the economic benefits derived from such projects?

My second question is about the Vietnamese language.

I know that Vietnamese linguists have been working hard and gaining good results in this field. Concretely they have compiled Vietnamese dictionaries... It has been announced that these dictionaries have been put on display and that the exhibitions have attracted many visitors. It is a pity that not all those interested in the Vietnamese language have received information about this. If I had known in advance what textbooks and dictionaries were to be published in your country, I would have been able to order them from our shops selling foreign books. So I wish you would publish regular information on this subject and publish more articles about the work of Vietnamese linguists. By the way I would like to know whether you have published Vietnamese textbooks for the use of foreigners?

My third question concerns the training of Vietnamese journalists, the activities of the Vietnamese press in general and the local press in such cities as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong in particular.

NICOLAI GUSEV
Griadovets — Vologodskaia
USSR

Dear Nicolai Gusev,

Thank you for having expressed interest in our publication and our country. We are most happy to know that you've found our review useful.

Your questions will be studied and answered in our coming issues.

With best wishes

VIETNAM COURIER

RENOVATION...

(Continued from page 21)

should be new vitality in trade-union activities and in the workers' movements. Every activity of the trade union and their cadres should mainly rely on education and persuasion.

The emulation movement should attract large number of people into forms of action suited to their occupations, qualifications and psychology. There should be real "competition" among people engaged in the same occupations. Spiritual mobilization should go hand in hand with material incentives. We must resolutely give up the organization of emulation in a subjective and voluntarist way, in disregard of objective conditions. We should sum up our experience in launching emulation movements in order to renovate our methods.

At the same time trade unions should be renovated organizationally, to make them into truly voluntary organizations. Intermediary links should be trimmed so that Party policies can quickly reach their members whose feelings and aspirations must be reported to the higher echelons in the fastest way.

To renovate the content and method of trade-union activities, one must attach great importance to renovating the thinking and upgrading the capacities of trade-union cadres. To this end, they should, accurately perceive the real situation of our country; our socio-economic targets in the initial stage of the period of transition to socialism; the new characteristics of our workers and State employees; and the nature and content of the functions of trade unions at present.

The zeal and ability of trade-union cadres must be raised further and their qualifications improved.

What is the relative importance of the class viewpoint, enthusiasm and ability of trade-union cadres? With regard to their ability, what is the relative importance of socio-political and economic-technological knowledge? How can the ranks of trade-union cadres be rejuvenated?

Such problems must be studied and conclusions reached in order to build correct bases for renovation. ●

CHRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(15 February — 14 March)

FEBRUARY

16. The SRV Council of State holds a regular session at which it adopts rules for the election of the 8th National Assembly, takes decisions to consolidate State organs under the Council of Ministers, appoints and discharges a number of members of the Council of Ministers.

17. Bucharest: Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1987 between Vietnam and Romania.

17 - 19. Vietnam attends a round-table conference for the Asian region sponsored by the United Nations and held in Kathmandu (Nepal) (See article on page 10).

18. A delegation of the GDR Light Industry Ministry, headed by Vice-Minister Polimann ends its visit to Vietnam. A protocol on labour cooperation for 1987 between the two countries is signed on this occasion.

Hanoi: Signing of minutes on cooperation between Vietnam and Australia for the publication in Vietnamese translation of the novel "Man Tree" by Australian writer Patrick White, a Nobel prize winner in literature.

20. *Hanoi*: Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1987 between Vietnam and Poland.

22 - 28: K. Salukov, Director of the Committee for Popular Culture and Education of the USSR Supreme Soviet, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

24 Feb - 1 March: A delegation of the charity organization Good Land (FRG) headed by its Director, R. Sverer, pays a visit to Vietnam.

26. *Binh Tri Thien*: Holding of a ceremony marking the reception of 160 tons of clothing, medicines and food, a gift of the Polish Government and people to the people of Binh Tri Thien province to help overcome the consequences of successive natural calamities in 1986.

26 - 28: Tserennadmid, Mongolian Minister of Public Health, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

27. *Ha Nam Ninh*: Holding of a ceremony marking the reception of 5,000 blankets, a gift of the Czechoslovak Government and people to the people of Ha Nam Ninh, a province ravaged by Typhoon No. 5 in 1986.

28 Feb. - 4 March: A trade delegation of Albania headed by S. Korbeci, alternate member of the Albanian Party of Labour Central Committee and Minister of Foreign Trade, visits Vietnam.

MARCH

1. Opening the National Soccer Tournament (First Division) for 1987 with the participation of 27 teams, 8 of them newly raised from Second Division.

3. *Hanoi:* Opening of the 14th session of the Vietnam — Hungary Commission for Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation.

5. Regional Director for the Western Pacific of the World Health Organization, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, visits Vietnam.

6. A delegation of the Left-wing Socialist Party of Norway, headed by Kristi Nost, Vice-Chairwoman of the Party, pays a visit to Vietnam.

7 - 15. Opening of the 1987 National Table Tennis Tournament sponsored by the daily *Nhan Dan*. Taking part in the tournament are 152 contestants from 20 provinces and cities and four branches of activity.

9 - 11. GDR Foreign Minister, Oskar Fischer, Member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany pays an official visit to Vietnam (See article on page 11).

10 - 12. *Hanoi:* Holding of the 13th session of the Vietnam — Bulgaria Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. An agreement on goods exchange and payment for 1986 — 1990 and a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1987 between Vietnam and Bulgaria are signed.

11. *Hanoi.* Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1987 between Vietnam and Mongolia.

11 - 13. E. Shevardnadze, Political Bureau member of the CPSU Central Committee and Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, pays an official visit to Vietnam (See article on page 4).

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FOR EXPORT

● *Shrimps in Dong Thap province.*

Photo: THANH HAI

● *Oranges in Co Linh, Tien Giang province.*

Photo: HOANG BA

● *Pepper planted by a peasant family in Binh Tri Thien province.*

Photo: VAN THINH

Le Vuong (born 1918), started his photographer's career in 1936. He is a member of the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers. His photos covering a wide range of subjects have been exhibited in the USSR, the GDR, Poland, Malaysia, France, Japan...

1. A mountain village in early morning mist.

2. Terraced fields.

3. Milch cows at the Ba Vi State Farm (Hanoi).